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THE HOMES AND HAUNTS  
OF  
OUR ELDER POETS.



THE  
HOMES AND HAUNTS  
OF  
OUR ELDER POETS.

R. H. Stoddard

WITH PORTRAITS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.



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*The Portraits in this volume of Bryant, Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier, and Holmes, are from drawings by WYATT EATON, and the Views, from drawings or sketches by R. SWAIN GIFFORD, HOMER MARTIN, FRANCIS LATHROP, R. RIORDAN, G. M. WHITE, C. A. VANDERHOOF, A. R. WAUD, and APPLETON BROWN.*

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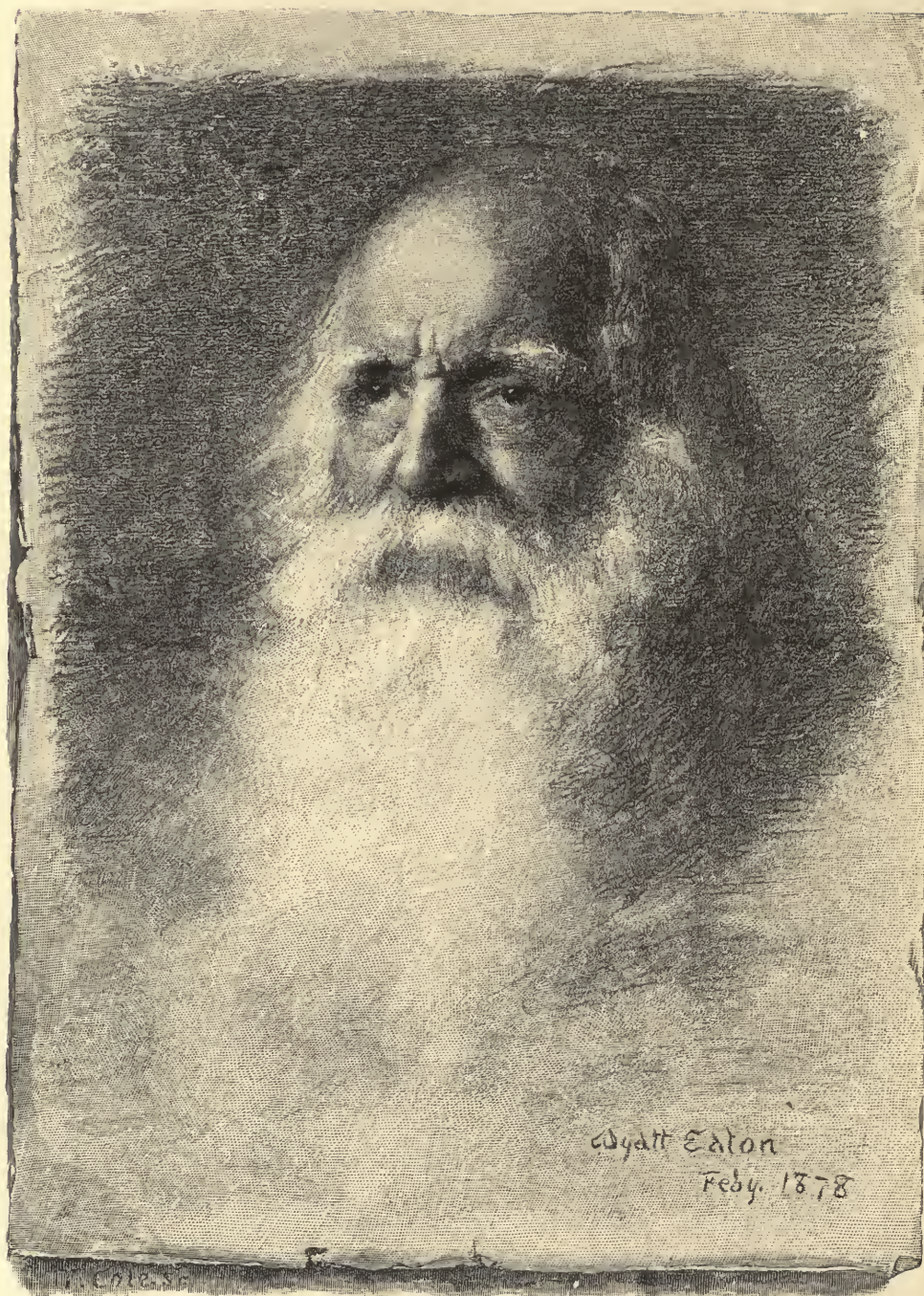
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TO THE  
MUSEUM



Wyatt Eaton  
Feby. 1878

W. Eaton









Post-haste to hurry into town,  
Time after time, and there fulfil  
~~Some~~ <sup>Some</sup> dirty plans; thus much I own  
That fear Lubin does with skill  
But bid him act a generous part,  
And show himself upright and true—  
A Christian at the very heart—  
That friar Lubin cannot do.

W. C. Bryant.





THE BRYANT HOMESTEAD AT CUMMINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS.

## WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

THE scenery of Cummington, Massachusetts, is more impressive from its breadth and elevation than from any feature of singular sublimity. The earth here is heaved up in broad-shouldered hills, separated by narrow glens and leafy ravines. On the slopes of these great

swells, almost mountain-like in height—for some are two thousand feet above the sea—are thrifty farms, with occasional breadths of barren soil, spongy mead, wild copse, and piles of out-cropping rock. Frequent springs of pure water issue from the hills and the borders of venerable groves. On the highest lands the forests have still their primitive wildness. The streams are swift and shallow over their rocky channels, with here and there deep pools under the dark shadows, where the trout hides when the heats of summer shrivel the veins that feed the sylvan springs of the hills above.

From the porch of the Cummington mansion, where the poet Bryant was born, one looks over a wide landscape some eight miles across, which embraces all the features that are peculiar to that section of Massachusetts, except the thickly wooded highlands to the northwest. The center of the view is hollowed to a deep and narrow valley, where flows a branch of the Westfield River, and on the eastern rim are the pleasant slopes of Plainfield. Spring lags on these high grounds, and autumn here puts on imperial splendors; for the trees, among which the sugar-maple predominates, are of a kind to glow royally under the effects of frost. In summer, the landscape is sumptuous with verdure, but in winter its aspect is usually severe and dreary, though sometimes it has a magnificent desolation.

In the neighborhood of the house are objects which have lent their influence to the poet's song, and which will always be associated with his name. Just beyond a meadow to the south is the grove which inspired his noble lines, "Inscription for an Entrance to a Wood":

"Stranger, if thou hast learned a truth which needs  
No school of long experience, that the world  
Is full of guilt and misery, and hast seen  
Enough of all its sorrows, crimes, and cares,  
To tire thee of it, enter this wild wood  
And view the haunts of Nature."

Under the tall maples here grows the "Yellow Violet," whose early advent he welcomed in verses of classic simplicity. Further down the



hill-side, where the soil is damp with hidden springs, flourishes in season the "Fringed Gentian," whose sweet lesson he interpreted in his maturer years. In the rear of the homestead, only a few rods remote, is "The Rivulet," the scene of his childish delight and his boyish dreams.

" This little rill that from the springs  
Of yonder grove its current brings,  
Plays on the slope awhile, and then  
Goes prattling into groves again,  
Oft to its warbling waters drew  
My little feet, when life was new."

Taking the road northward one comes, after a pleasant walk of fifteen minutes, to the bleak hill where beneath brambles and weeds are hidden "The Two Graves" of the old couple described with such touching fidelity in his poem. Truly,

" 'Tis a neighborhood that knows no strife."

Going a little further on that romantic path, one gets amid cooler and wilder solitudes of forest and rock and impetuous stream, where "Thanatopsis" might have been meditated, and where more than once has sparkled the royal jewelry portrayed in "A Winter Piece." Here among the Highlands is Deer Hill, and in the distance northward rises the Williamstown range where, highest of all,

" Stands Graylock silent in the summer sky."

Retracing our steps to the house and going southward, we pass the neat school-house lately built for the children in the neighborhood; and then further on the old burial-place where sleep the parents of the poet. Turning to the left, we go down into the valley of East Cummington village, on whose outskirts, where the Agawam, a branch of the Westfield River, makes a curve in a lovely nook, is the fire-proof library which Mr. Bryant presented to his native town. Taking the nearest road up the hill on our return, we soon come to the site of the

old church, of which not a vestige remains, where the family attended in the poet's youth, and to fields familiar to his boyish sports and toils. There is hardly a spot here but is suggestive of something



THE RIVULET, CUMMINGTON.

significant in the lives and characters of the generation that has passed away. Human nature was as full of foibles and self-assertion a century ago as now, and the "cloth" was not always held in reverence. The first Congregational minister settled in Cummington was the Rev.

James Briggs. He was in time the happy owner of a few sheep, which he highly valued, and in whose welfare he was supposed to have quite as much solicitude as was consistent with a man whose treasures did not belong to this fleeting world. Now, a neighbor of the parson, for some reason, had a hard grudge against him, and was impatient to gratify it. The opportunity finally came. One evening he appeared at the parsonage, and, in a manner betraying the liveliest concern, informed Mr. Briggs that one of his most valuable sheep was very sick down in a field near the highway. The anxious clergyman sped to the place described with breathless haste, and lo! there in the corner of a fence, dead drunk, was a favorite parishioner—a sick sheep indeed. The neighbor doubtless had his revenge.

The homestead property at Cummington, with additions making an estate of more than four hundred acres, came into the possession of Mr. Bryant some years ago. The work of renovating and enlarging the old house was finished in 1864, and here, until the time of his death, Mr. Bryant spent the months of August and September of each year. He planted orchards and groves of larch and birch, built roads, and inaugurated a system of improvements that greatly enhanced the value of the property.

William Cullen Bryant was born November 3, 1794. With his earliest years was shown a passionate love of nature, which marked his whole life, and which is such a conspicuous feature of his poetry. He tells us how his infant feet were drawn to the little rivulet, near his father's door, and as they grew stronger he began to ramble over the hills and amid the wild woods about his home. It is likely that the boy made verses before he was suspected of such a thing, for it was as natural for him to put his heart into numbers as for the birds to sing. The first account, however, that we have of his poetic gift is of a paraphrase of the first chapter of the Book of Job, in his tenth year. This work his grandfather hired him to do, and paid him ninepence when it was finished. Not long after this he wrote a poem on an eclipse of the sun, and another on the death of a cousin. About this time his verses began to find their way into the "Hampshire



Gazette," and so were well circulated in the neighborhood. His father, Dr. Peter Bryant, a gentleman of very fine mind and culture, was quick to detect and encourage his son's gift, and began early to cherish high hope of his future career. Dr. Bryant himself was a good writer of Hudibrastic verse, and the poetic tendency in the family can be traced back for several generations. It is plain that his influence over his son was every way wholesome, and that his



THE HOMESTEAD LIBRARY.

training was given with the most judicious discrimination. Fortunate was the son in the genial influences of home at the very budding of his genius, and happy the noble parent in having so apt and rare a pupil!

Before he was fourteen years old the young poet produced the "Embargo," a satirical political poem, which was published in 1810. A second edition was called for, which contained several additional poems, among them "The Spanish Revolution." As the "Monthly

Anthology," a critical journal of Boston, had expressed disbelief in the alleged youth of the writer, a certificate to the fact was appended in consequence to this edition.

At the age of fourteen young Bryant began the study of Latin with the Rev. Dr. Thomas Snell, of Brookfield, and the next year took



APPROACH TO THE HOMESTEAD :  
THE OLD POPLAR.

up Greek with such ardor under the direction of the Rev. Moses Hallock, of Plainfield, that in two months he had read the entire New Testament in the original. At sixteen he entered Williams College as a sophomore, but left at the close of his second term with an honorable dismissal, intending to enter the junior class at Yale at the beginning of the next collegiate year, and to finish his course at that institution.



He was fully prepared for the junior class when the time arrived for application at Yale, but the straitened circumstances of his father compelled him to forego his warmly cherished intention. He continued, however, to pursue his studies with the same conscientious devotion as if he were under the eye of a professor, with all the stimulus of the recitation room.

The impression of his boyhood left on his brothers, Arthur and John H. Bryant, who are still living, is yet pleasantly vivid. His return home during his vacations was always hailed with joy by the family. He was loved and admired by all, and his society gave new animation to the household. He delighted his younger brothers by his lively and playful spirit, frolicking with them and tossing them in his arms, as if gifted with unusual strength, and he astonished them by his fervid declamation of his "Indian War Song," translations of "Ædipus Tyrannus," and other vigorous poems. They were proud of their brother, who seemed to them so learned and strong, and whose conduct they tried to imitate. This was at a time when his intellectual powers were fast ripening, and when his consciousness of life, as the poet sees and experiences it, was becoming more and more quickening and profound. This period in his career has a peculiar interest, and this young man, with his fresh spirit and hopes, so cordial and sprightly in the household, so docile to parental guidance, so studious and mastering his books with such ease, so deep in communion with nature, already moved with the solemn impulses that were soon to find a voice in his "Thanatopsis," and withal so pure and simple, and apparently so unconscious of the scope and rare quality of his powers, presents a picture which we love to contemplate as the frontispiece of a life which has gone on with such stately beauty to its place among men.

Mr. Bryant pursued his legal studies for two years with Judge Samuel Howe, of Worthington, and finished them with the Hon. William Baylies, of Bridgewater. He was admitted to the bar at Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1815, and was then twenty-one years old. For a year he practiced his profession at Plainfield, near his birthplace,

where he wrote "Lines to a Water-fowl." The lesson of trust in the divine goodness has no such perfect expression in literature as in this poem. In both form and substance it is faultless. Like the other productions of its author, its conception was natural. One evening he saw a wild-duck flying across a sky of marvelous beauty, and a picture of the divine providence was revealed to him. Southey's poem "Ebb-tide" suggested the form of the stanza, and his genius wrought the elevated and tranquilizing verses, which were published in the "North American Review," soon after the appearance of his "Thanatopsis" in



SCHOOL-HOUSE ON THE BRYANT ESTATE, CUMMINGTON.

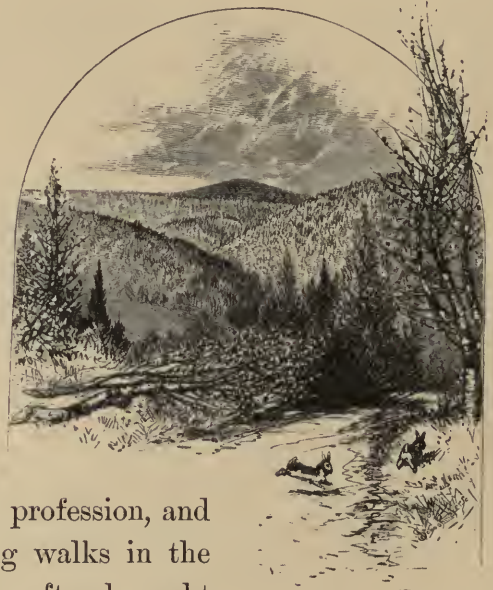
the same periodical, though the latter production was not printed till perhaps five years after it was composed. That such a majestic strain—a chant of such grand sweep and power—could be the work of a stripling, has always been a marvel in our literature. His withholding it so long from the press accords with the strong character of the singer.

In 1817, Mr. Bryant removed to Great Barrington, Massachusetts, where he remained nine years. Berkshire County is famous for its picturesque beauty, and the scenery around Barrington embraces some of its chief attractions. In many a curve, and here and there under the shade of overhanging trees, the Housatonic flows through the fair meadows of a wide valley, bordered by abrupt ridges, densely wooded,



and full of pleasant farms. Monument Mountain and Green River, celebrated in our poet's song, are in the neighborhood. To the southwest are the noble heights of the Taconic range, the most elevated summits of the State, among whose glens are the famous Bash-bish Falls. A pleasant drive south through Sheffield takes one to the lovely lakes of Salisbury, Connecticut. All around the village are charming nooks of grove and glen and stream. With all these places, in the course of time, the poet became familiar.

There are a few elderly people yet living who remember Mr. Bryant, during his residence in Barrington, as a reserved, studious man of the strictest honor, who shunned society and worked hard at his profession, and whose recreation consisted in long walks in the woods and fields, from which he often brought armfuls of flowers to analyze, for he was an excellent botanist. He continued here his literary labors, but did not allow them to hinder his professional career, which was successful, and which promised to become very eminent. Several of the poems which he wrote in Barrington appeared in the "United States Gazette," published in Boston, and he also contributed "Green River," "A Walk at Sunset," "To the West Wind," to R. H. Dana's "Idle Man." It was here that he composed "The Ages"—one of his longest and most notable poems, which was delivered in 1821 before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Harvard, in Commencement week. This was the eventful year of his history, as it saw his marriage with Miss Fanny Fairchild—a union that, beginning under happy auspices, realized the beauty of its promise.



VIEW OF GRAYLOCK.

Yielding to encouraging representations, and particularly to the wishes of his friend, Henry D. Sedgwick, Esq.; in 1825 Mr. Bryant removed to New York. His intention of pursuing a literary career was carried into effect by accepting the associate editorship of the "New York Review," a periodical of high rank, which, in the course of a year, however, was merged into "The United States Review and Literary Gazette." In these monthlies Mr. Bryant published some of his most popular poems, such as "The Death of the Flowers" and "The African Chief," and also many admirable reviews. Among his contributors were R. H. Dana, Robert C. Sands, and Fitz-Green Halleck.

Mr. Bryant began to write for the "New York Evening Post" the year following his arrival in New York, and in 1827 became one of its editors. This newspaper was founded by William Coleman in 1801, and after the death of this able writer Mr. Bryant became its editor-in-chief—a position which he sustained to the day of his death. There was first associated with him William Leggett, who continued this relation till 1836, and who was a man of remarkable force and courageous spirit.

"The words of fire that from his pen  
Were flung upon the fervid page,—  
Still move, still shake the hearts of men,  
Amid a cold and coward age."

Parke Godwin (Mr. Bryant's son-in-law) and the Hon. John Bigelow, gentlemen whose literary eminence is well known, were also for many years connected with the paper. Its influence upon the thought and morals of the nation has been wholesome and helpful to a remarkable degree. It has been a model of good taste, correct English, pure principles, and an intelligent and independent treatment of the great topics of public interest. During Mr. Bryant's editorial career of more than fifty years were waged the most important political conflicts in the history of the republic, and in these he has manfully participated. On questions of national policy concerning the old

United States Bank, the war with Mexico, the admission of slavery into the territories and its abolition, the tariff, the Ashburton treaty, the War of the Rebellion, amnesty, the Alabama claims, the San Domingo muddle, civil service, resumption of specie payments, and other subjects of vital importance, his utterances were prompt, unequivocal, and just; and he maintained his principles with an unshaken constancy. He never waited to catch the breath of popular opinion before flinging abroad his standard. The question with him always was, "What is right? What subserves human interests best? What is the province and duty of government?" And so throughout his career he was the uncompromising enemy of political rings, class legislation, and jobbery, and corruption of all sorts, and the friend and ally of humane and liberal institutions, righteous reform, and the administration of impartial justice. Indeed, there is no species of political iniquity that he did not vigorously assail, and no doctrines of permanent advantage to the commonwealth that he did not judiciously advocate and set firmer in the minds and hearts of men. He was a statesman of the best type, and, as was said by a distinguished senator, "he is a teacher of statesmen." He asked nothing of his country but the privilege to serve her interests. Not even his bitterest political opponents ever accused him of a desire for public office. It is one of the marvels of his great career that, amid the engrossing labors and cares of editorial life, he kept always a sweet temper for scholastic pursuits.

Mr. Bryant traveled extensively in this country and abroad. His first visit to Europe was made in 1834. In 1852 his journey was extended to Egypt and Palestine. He also traveled in the West Indies, and in his later years in Mexico. With many of the countries and literatures of continental Europe he was familiar by protracted visits and studious observation, having been no less than six times abroad. During his visits to Great Britain he was cordially received by many distinguished men of letters, but he was perhaps on the most intimate terms with Wordsworth and Rogers. His days at Ambleside he remembered with pleasure. He always found Words-



worth amiable, glad to walk and talk, and not disagreeably egotistic. Mr. Bryant received particular attentions from the poet Rogers, with whom he frequently dined and breakfasted. Among the many interesting reminiscences of his intercourse with the English poets, there is an anecdote of Rogers which is too characteristic to withhold. On a visit to London in 1849, Rogers said to him: "Our poets seem to be losing their minds. Campbell's son was in a mad-house, and, if the father had been put there in the last years of his life, it would have been the proper place for him. Bowles became weak-minded, and as for Southey, you know what happened to him. Moore was here the other day, and I asked, 'Moore, how long have you been in town?' 'Three or four days,' he replied. 'What! three



CUMMINGTON LIBRARY, FOUNDED BY MR. BRYANT.

or four days and not let me know it?' 'I beg pardon,' said he, putting his hand to his forehead, 'I believe I came to town this morning.' As to Wordsworth, a gentleman who saw him lately said to me, 'You

would not find Wordsworth much changed ; he talks rationally.' ” The letters of Mr. Bryant written during his travels are graceful and valuable compositions, showing his enjoyment of natural scenery, his accurate studies of society and governments, and his interest in all that concerns human welfare.

In 1845 he purchased the Roslyn estate, a beautiful piece of property lying along Hempstead Harbor, Long Island, within easy distance of New York, yet far enough remote for the seclusion that is so grateful to the scholar. It is said that the name which Mr. Bryant gave to the village was suggested by the fact recorded in the town



GRAVE OF MR. BRYANT'S FATHER, CUMMINGTON.

annals, that the British marched out of Hempstead to the tune of "Roslyn Castle." The frame of the Roslyn mansion is at least one hundred years old, but the building has been repaired and enlarged with admirable taste and judgment, so that, while it has every needed convenience for a country residence, it is an harmonious feature of the scenery. It is happily located, being sheltered by wooded hills on the north and commanding beautiful views of the ample grounds of the premises, the bay, and its lovely shores. In the poet's hands the place has been improved and embellished till it has very many attrac-

tions, but nothing is overdone. In the grounds around the house are a great variety of fruits and flowers that thrive in that genial climate. In the hollow of the spacious lawn below the mansion is a pretty lake fed by living springs which issue from its upper bank, and shaded on its opposite embankment by a thicket of evergreens, trees festooned with creepers, and flowering shrubs. Amid a cluster of these stands an old mill, that is turned by the stream from the lake, which adds cheerful music to its generous service. On the brow of the slope, a little way from the garden, stand the immemorial pear-trees which are so gracefully mentioned in the poem "Among the Trees,"

"That with spring-time burst  
Into such breadth of bloom."

It was the poet's custom, when the fruit was ripe, to give the children of the neighborhood a festival beneath their branches, where



VIEW OF HEMPSTEAD HARBOR FROM THE HILL EAST OF MR. BRYANT'S HOUSE AT ROSLYN.



they could feast and play to their hearts' content. Here a swing was erected for their amusement, and the sports and pleasures were enjoyed by the host, whose heart never grew old.

Going up the hill above the house, one wanders in the lanes and pastures among the maples and apple-trees and evergreens which Mr. Bryant planted, and from the different points of the uplands looks off on a prospect diversified by pleasant cottages, gardens, fruitful fields, and the wide sweep of the waters of the bay and sound. Among the notable trees that enhance the interest of the place, besides the pears already mentioned, is a gigantic black-walnut, whose age is estimated at one hundred and fifty years, and whose girth is twenty-eight feet. Though showing signs of advanced life, the tree gives its annual harvest of nuts. Only a little way from this, close together, are a notable maple and a willow, while a grand old oak spreads its arms over the bank near the lake by the house.

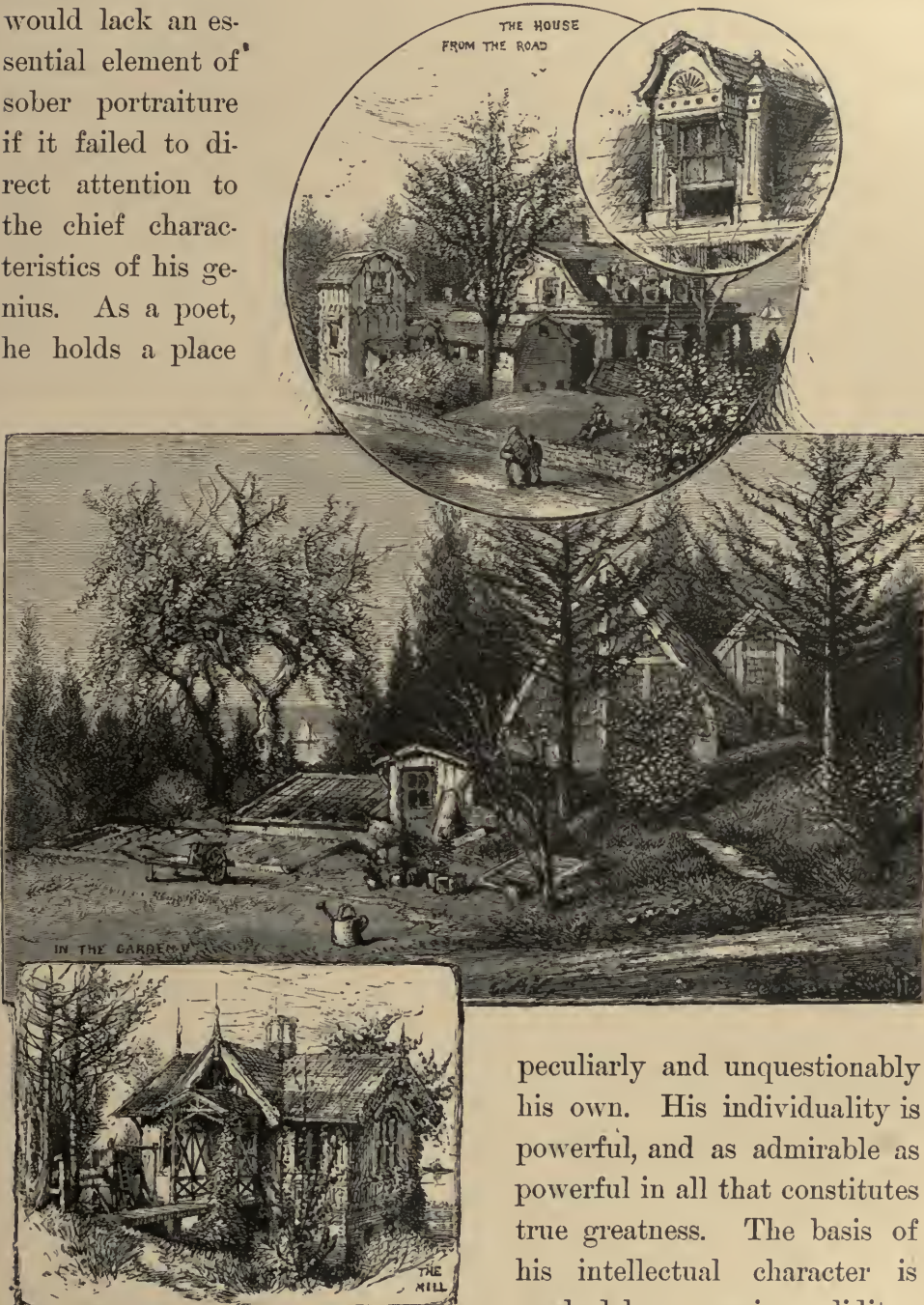
In 1872 Mr. Bryant presented to the town in which he lived so long "Roslyn Hall," a building particularly designed for uses of a public character, such as lectures, concerts, church festivals, and social gatherings requiring special accommodations.

Some of Mr. Bryant's most important studies and literary work were done at his home in Roslyn, where he spent the months of May, June, July, October, and November, and usually a portion of April. While he had a good many books in his New York residence and also in his house in Cummington, the larger part of his collection was kept in his library at Roslyn. This selection had evidently been made with great care, and embraces those works for which he had the most use and which covered the fields of his favorite studies. Here are found the best editions of the ancient classics, standard works in German, French, Spanish, Italian, the old English writers, and the prominent modern productions in literature, and economic and theological science. Mr. Bryant was always interested in art, and was the owner of considerable that is illustrative of this branch of culture.

Though the brevity of this paper forbids any such thing as a critical notice of Mr. Bryant's poetical works, or even the mention of



many of them, it would lack an essential element of sober portraiture if it failed to direct attention to the chief characteristics of his genius. As a poet, he holds a place



SCENES AT "CEDARMERE," MR. BRYANT'S HOME AT

ROSLYN.

peculiarly and unquestionably his own. His individuality is powerful, and as admirable as powerful in all that constitutes true greatness. The basis of his intellectual character is marked by a massive solidity; but, with his masculine vigor,

his firm, tough, sinewy mental fiber, there is all the sprightliness, gracefulness, and sweetness that are generally supposed, in the case of poets, to be gifts of natures cast in a less heroic mold. He was a great artist, as well as a true seer. For, while his glance pierced to the soul of things, he knew how to give the proper form to his vision in the symbols of human speech. His felicitous language, his rhythmic grace, the compression and suggestiveness of his thought, his tenderness, the breadth of his range, the fidelity of his portraiture, the dignity and symmetry of his creations, only go to show the extraordinary qualities of the man, the vitality of his contact with nature, and the great life that he lived in himself. Back of his work is his strong, rich, masterful personality; and his eye is clear, and his hand sure, and his voice firm, while his soul is on fire. The fact that his poems do not wear out, that they have a permanent freshness which is always welcome, is the evidence that they are alive with a divine passion. As Emerson says: "He is original because he is sincere—a true painter of the face of this country and of the sentiment of his own people. It is his proper praise that he first, and he only, made known to mankind our northern landscape—its summer splendor, its autumn russet, its winter lights and glooms. . . . So, there is no feature of day or night in the country which does not, to a contemplative mind, recall the name of Bryant." In his verse, Nature is reflected with her subtile spirit, her largeness, and delicacy, and simplicity, and mystery. There is conveyed, even in his briefest poems, an impression of fullness, which is the characteristic of only singular names in literature. This also was peculiar to the appearance of the man, who, though of slight build and medium height, gave one the feeling of a great presence. While his original poems are not voluminous, for he wrote no epic or drama, they are comprehensive in their scope and rich in subjects of the deepest interest to the reflective mind. His poetry not only never wearies, but refreshes, inspires, consoles, for, as a priest of Nature, he imparts what Nature gives to the deepest recognition. Take such poems as the "Summer Wind," "The Death of the Flowers," "A Summer Ramble," "The Evening Wind," "The Prairies," "The Fountain,"





AMONG THE TREES AT CEDARMERE.



"The Forest Hymn," and one has the expression of his best experience in communion with the world without him. And where life is touched sincerely by the contemplation of life, what has more sug-



VIEW OF CEDARMERE.

gestive strains  
than "The  
Battle-Field,"

"The Night Journey of a  
River," "Thanatopsis," "The  
Future Life," "The Return of  
Youth," "June," "The Planting

of the Apple-Tree," "The Song of the Sower," and "The Flood of  
Years"? The spirit of Liberty voicing the best hopes and aspira-  
tions of humanity on earth has no nobler prophecy than in such

chants as "The Antiquity of Freedom," "The Winds," "Italy," "Not Yet," "Our Country's Call," and "The Death of Slavery." In the whole range of his writings there is no line or word that appeals to an unworthy feeling—not a suggestion that is impure. Not very much blank verse has been produced in this century that is equal to his.

Milton himself has written considerable that is not so good, and not a great quantity that is better when measured by the severest tests. Between the two men in their poetical cast and political predilections an interesting parallel might be drawn.

It can not be doubted that the character of the man has much to do with the sterling value of his writings. To us Bryant always seemed great in the simplicity of his manhood. It is this aspect of him, as much as his place in literature, that affords such an instructive example to this generation. Certainly, among those who appreciate exalted qualities and who are familiar with the careers of our public



LIBRARY AT CEDARMERE.



men, there is but one opinion of Bryant's character. His reputation is absolutely untarnished. But his virtue was not a negative one. He felt the pressure of powerful parties, walked amid the very whirlwinds of political controversy and strife, and never sacrificed a principle nor proved unfaithful to his convictions. Testimony from a long array of names of the highest distinction in the republic is unanimous as to his integrity, his courage, his devotion to his country, his sincere and unsullied life. What Holmes says is simply the condensation of the tributes that his contemporaries have uttered :

“ How shall we thank him that, in evil days,  
He faltered never—nor for blame, nor praise,  
Nor hire, nor party, shamed his earlier lays ?  
But as his boyhood was of manliest hue,  
So to his youth his manly years were true,  
All dyed in royal purple, through and through.”

In a similar strain of reverent gratitude sings Lowell :

“ And shall we praise ? God's praise was his before,  
And on our futile laurels he looks down,  
Himself our bravest crown ! ”

But he was the possessor of something more than a stern morality. To his Roman virtue he added the devout and affectionate spirit of an humble follower of Christ. His poetry shows his serious, reverent, religious nature, and his hymns particularly (only a few of which are known yet to the public) glow with Christian trust and aspiration. But only those who knew him intimately are aware of the depth and sweetness of his Christian character, which seemed continually ripening through his long journey.

It is easy to believe that one in whom the currents of life ran with the sympathies and purposes that animated him would serve kindly in all his relations. The demands upon his time were manifold and onerous, and yet he was always ready to deny himself for the promotion of a deserving cause. The citizens of New York are

familiar with his various services. A little incident illustrates well his deference to the voice of duty, even when none could criticise a refusal to respond. Going to church with his family one fine Sunday morning, at Cummington, where a good congregation assembled, no clergyman appeared. It seemed hardly proper that the people who came to worship should separate without any religious service whatever, and it was suggested to Mr. Bryant that he was the proper one to lead their devotions. He modestly accepted the invitation, went into the pulpit, read the Scriptures and offered the Lord's Prayer, in which the congregation joined.

Little need be said in evidence of his intellectual activity; his industry kept pace with his longevity. It is notable that some of his severest work was done in his old age. It was in his seventy-first year that he began the translation of the "*Iliad*." This was finished, December, 1869, when the "*Odyssey*" was immediately taken up and completed, December, 1871. The whole translation of Homer was accomplished, at such intervals as he could command, during the space of six years. His average daily work was forty lines, but sometimes, on days of unusual poetic fervor, eighty lines were achieved. The fire, the movement, the simplicity, of the old Greek bard are preserved in pure, idiomatic English; and, whatever the critics may finally conclude as to the merit of the work, we unhesitatingly give it the preference over all other efforts to reproduce the original in our Anglo-Saxon. The achievement at his time of life is an extraordinary one in the history of literature, and, if he had done nothing else in these late days, this would insure a brilliant fame. But he did a great deal more. Besides giving proper attention to the "*Evening Post*," revising a large collection of choice poetry, and doing careful work in the supervision of the "*Popular History of the United States*," he constantly pursued his literary studies and produced original poems which are not surpassed by any in his prime. "*The Flood of Years*," written in his eighty-second year, has all the grace, the strength, the statuesque beauty, the sublime movement, that make verse immortal.

To the last Mr. Bryant's memory showed no signs of infirmity. He could repeat, if required, the greater part of all his poems, and his familiarity with the exact language of authors was amazing. The companion of his walks found nothing more delightful than his apt quotations, his pithy and instructive observations on politics, literature, and religion. He had a rich fund of anecdote illustrative of persons and places, but he was entirely free from egotism. Something of this would be agreeable to those who are interested in all phases of his experience and life. No one ever detected in his conversation any jealousy of distinguished names. He was quick to recognize and applaud merit. There was nothing in his manner that one associates with



THE HALL, PRESENTED TO ROSLYN BY MR. BRYANT.

the querulousness of old age ; indeed, his manner was simplicity itself. And yet, with all his ease and artlessness, his presence was exceedingly impressive. He seemed, no doubt, cold and reserved to strangers ; but there was a rare tenderness under his austere and kingly look, which was all the sweeter from the strength of soul that kept it.

Mr. Bryant's support of the various utilities that promote the well-being of the masses, such as improved tenement-houses, good drainage, proper water supply for cities, and public parks, is well known. His usual good judgment in benefactions for the public good



is seen in his gifts of the Cummington Library, Roslyn Hall, and three or four miles of solid road, which he caused to be built at his



THE PARLOR AT CEDARMERE.

own expense along the mountain-sides of his native town. During the last decade of his life, he came into closer contact with his fellow-men than formerly. His visits to the public schools and colleges attested his personal interest in the work of education.

A full account of Mr. Bryant's relations with the institutions of literature and art in New York would make an article by itself. He was one of the founders of the Century Club, and was its president at the time of his death. With the Historical Society he was long identified. He assisted in the establishment of the Metropolitan Museum. The Academy of Design always reckoned him among its influential friends, and, when its new building was finished, he delivered the address at its inauguration. On occasions when the culture of the

metropolis was to be represented, he was selected by general consent as its appropriate oracle. He was chosen to pronounce the memorial tributes to Cole, Cooper, Irving, Verplanck, and Halleck, when these eminent Americans passed away. When, as a step preparatory to his nomination for President, it was deemed advisable to present Mr. Lincoln under impressive auspices in New York, Mr. Bryant was asked to preside at the meeting as its most illustrious citizen. At the unveiling of the statues of Scott, Shakespeare, and Goethe, he was selected to pronounce the words for the occasions. The Legislature of the State of New York never received an American with the honors which a few years ago it gave to him. The Century Club celebrated his seventieth birthday by a festival, memorable, not only in the annals of the society, but in the extraordinary character of those who participated in it.

A prominent feature of the occasion was the presentation to Mr. Bryant of a portfolio of some forty studies by the artist members of the club, among whom were Huntington, Church, Durand, Gignoux, Launt Thompson, Kensett, Rogers, McEntee, Gifford, Eastman Johnson, and Bierstadt. Bancroft, the historian, delivered the congratulatory address; Emerson, Dr. Osgood, R. H. Dana, Jr., and Evarts joined in salutations in terms of glowing portraiture. Poetical tributes came from Lowell, Whittier, Holmes, Tuckerman, Bayard Taylor, Stoddard, Boker, and others, in strains of lofty admiration. Longfellow, Pierpont, Halleck, Willis, and Verplanck sent letters of friendly greeting.

In 1866 a great sorrow fell upon the poet. After a beautiful companionship of forty-five years, Mrs. Bryant was removed from his side. She had that genuine feminine sympathy, and that intelligence, unselfishness, and unfailing sweetness of disposition, which peculiarly fitted her for her position as the wife of such a man. Her piety was of that deep, even, undemonstrative kind that casts a cheerful luster over life and home, that is such a sure resource in the day of trial, and whose influence is so sacred and persuasive. One of Mr. Bryant's most exquisite poems, "The Future Life," was inspired by her. Mr. Rogers, the poet, used to say that he could never read that poem



without tears. After her long and dangerous illness in Italy, in 1858, Mrs. Bryant's convalescence was welcomed by another admirable composition, "The Life that Is":

"Twice wert thou given me ; once in thy fair prime,  
Fresh from the fields of youth, when first we met,  
And all the blossoms of that hopeful time  
Clustered and glowed where'er thy steps were set.

"And now, in thy ripe autumn, once again  
Given back to fervent prayers and yearnings strong,  
From the drear realm of sickness and of pain  
When we had watched, and feared, and trembled long."

But this renewed companionship was not very long to be protracted. The separation was grievous, but he gave way to no childish sorrow. More intense labor than ever was the chief sign of the acuteness of his sufferings. Life afterward was lived more with things unseen. His accomplished daughter, Julia, after her mother's death, took charge of the household.

Mr. Bryant's vigorous longevity has but few parallels among distinguished intellectual men. It was due partly to an inherited endurance of constitution, and partly to the most rigid observance of hygienic rules. His grandfather, at the age of eighty-five, could mount a horse with the agility of a young man, and is said to have ridden out to visit patients only two weeks before his death. His father, at the age of fifty-two, fell a prey to consumption, induced, no doubt, by exposure and overwork as a physician in a section of country that made the practice of his profession so severe a tax upon all his energies. A tendency to pulmonary disease, however, was peculiar to the family, and a gifted sister of the poet fell a victim to it at an early age. In his early manhood, Mr. Bryant himself showed symptoms of the malady sufficiently marked to cause considerable solicitude among his friends, few of whom thought that his life would be a long one. Any little recklessness of living would probably have resulted fatally fifty years ago, while by simple inconsiderateness he would, doubtless,

have passed away before middle life. But, by the strictest temperance, regular exercise, and the most careful observance of the laws of health, under the Divine blessing, he attained his great age of eighty-four, with a vigor of body and mind excellently preserved. It is remarkable for a person of his organization that, since the age of



VIEW FROM THE FRONT DOOR, CEDARMERE.

fifteen, he never suffered from headache. He did his intellectual tasks in the morning, and never wrote or studied at night. It was his custom to retire, ordinarily, soon after nine o'clock, and he rose usually



at five. Before breakfast, he took regularly his gymnastic exercise with the dumb-bells and club. He loved the bath. His food was simple and nutritious. He ate sparingly of flesh and fish, while his diet was largely of oatmeal, hominy, milk, and fruits in their season, of which he was fond. He used neither tea nor coffee, and was a stranger to tobacco. He took his wine in the uncrushed grape, which fruit, with many other varieties, he successfully cultivated. His passion for trees and flowers is well known, and his home on Long Island gives abundant evidence of his taste in this particular. Mr. Bryant was fortunate in having for the overseers of his property in the country men of intelligence and probity. Mr. Dawes, a brother of the senator of that name from Massachusetts, had charge of the Cummington farm, and Mr. George B. Cline superintended the place at Roslyn for many years with approved taste and conscientious devotion.

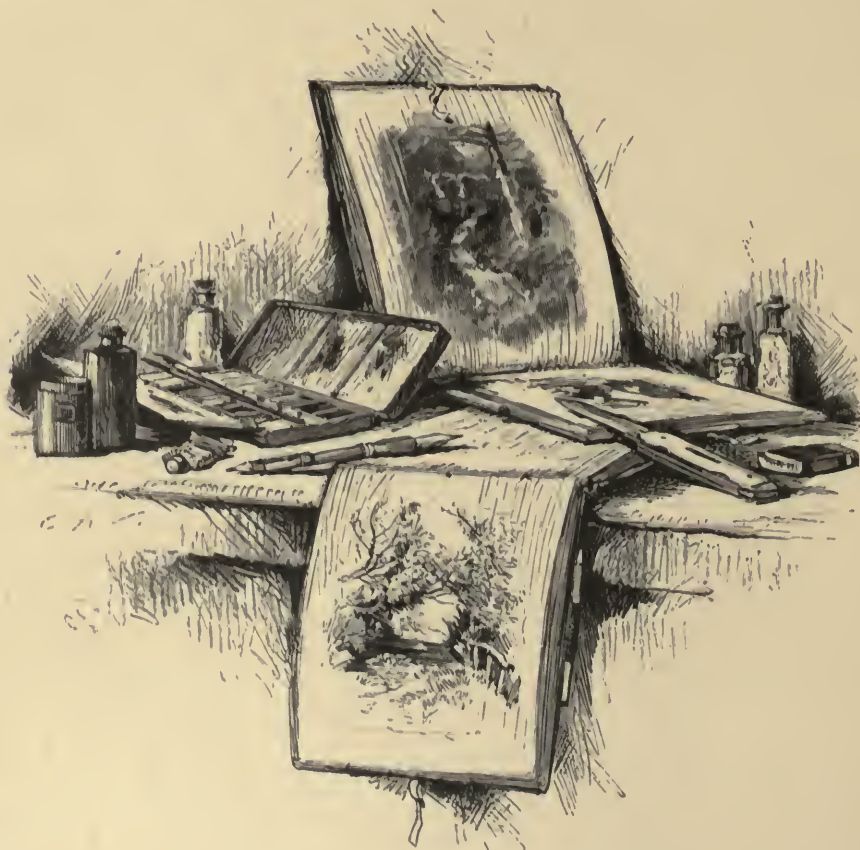
It is granted to but few to stand, as Bryant did, on the summit of a long life made so beautiful by virtue and so endeared to men by noble service and exalted genius. He is a grand figure in the history of our country. The wisest and best of the land revere and honor him. He illustrates the most admirable type of manhood, and is an example, to this generation and to those who will follow, of a life whose rare gifts have all been consecrated to the highest uses of humanity.

Mr. Bryant's vitality was remarkable in so old a man. Unhappily, however, he was vain of his strength, and sometimes overtaxed it. Had it been otherwise, he might, not unnaturally, have been alive to-day. On the afternoon of Wednesday, May 29, 1878 (a day of mid-summer heat), a bust of Mazzini was unveiled in Central Park, and Mr. Bryant delivered an address. Immediately afterward he crossed the green to see the Halleck statue. Both in walking and in speaking he was unnecessarily exposed, and the result was an attack of vertigo, which caused a heavy fall. For several days his recovery was deemed probable; but early on the morning of Wednesday, the 12th of June, his spirit passed away. Two days later, a distinguished



company gathered to hear a funeral oration by the Rev. Dr. Bellows ; and then, when the last services of the church had been performed, children strewed flowers on a new-made grave at Roslyn—a new-made grave by the side of one which had been filled for several years. Death, it has been remarked, came to the front in the season which he had himself described as best befitting scenes of death and burial :

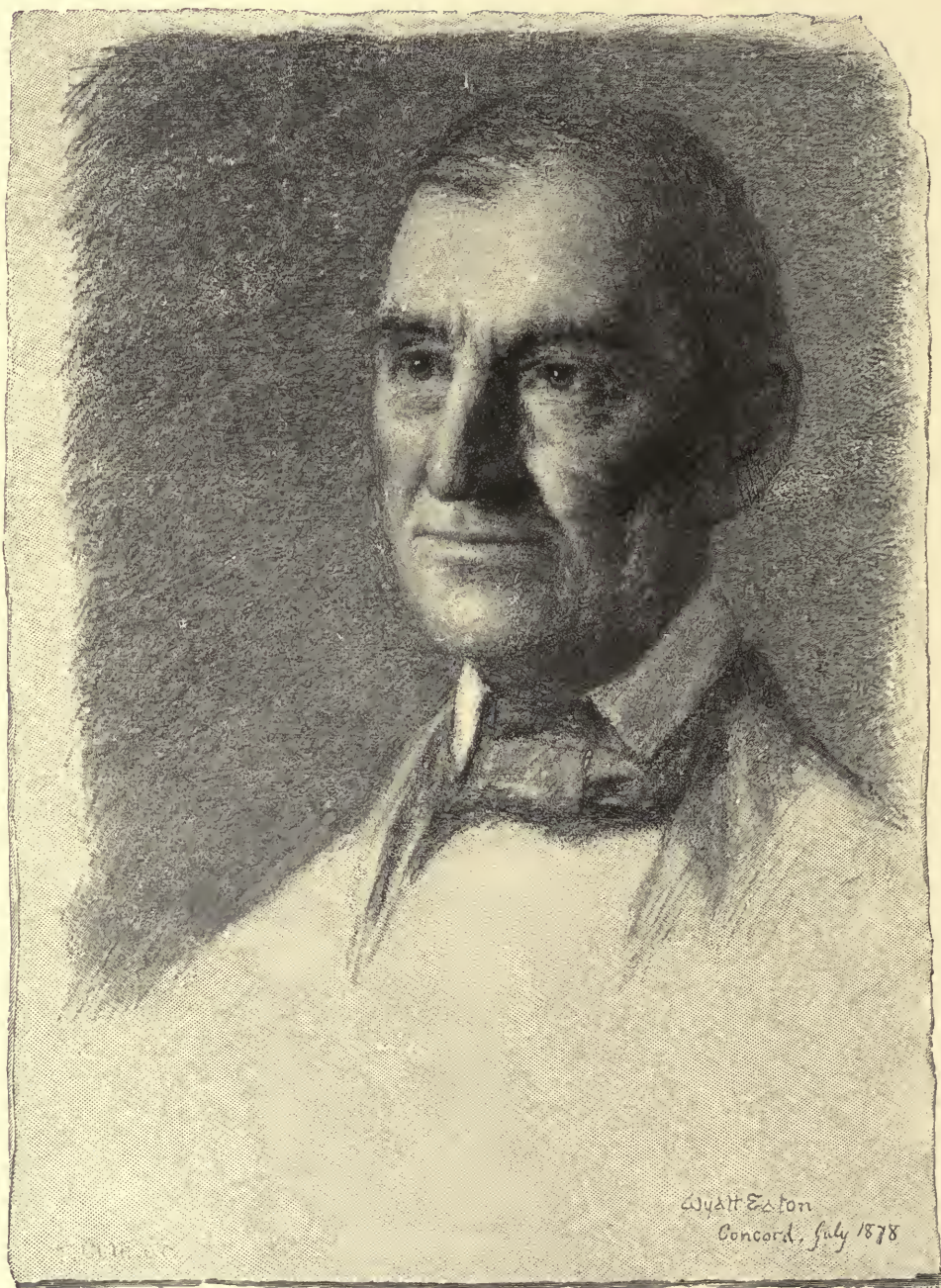
“ ’Twere pleasant that in leafy June,  
When brooks send up a cheerful tune,  
And groves a joyful sound,  
The sexton’s hand, my grave to make,  
The rich, green mountain turf should break.”







TO VIND  
ANTHONY









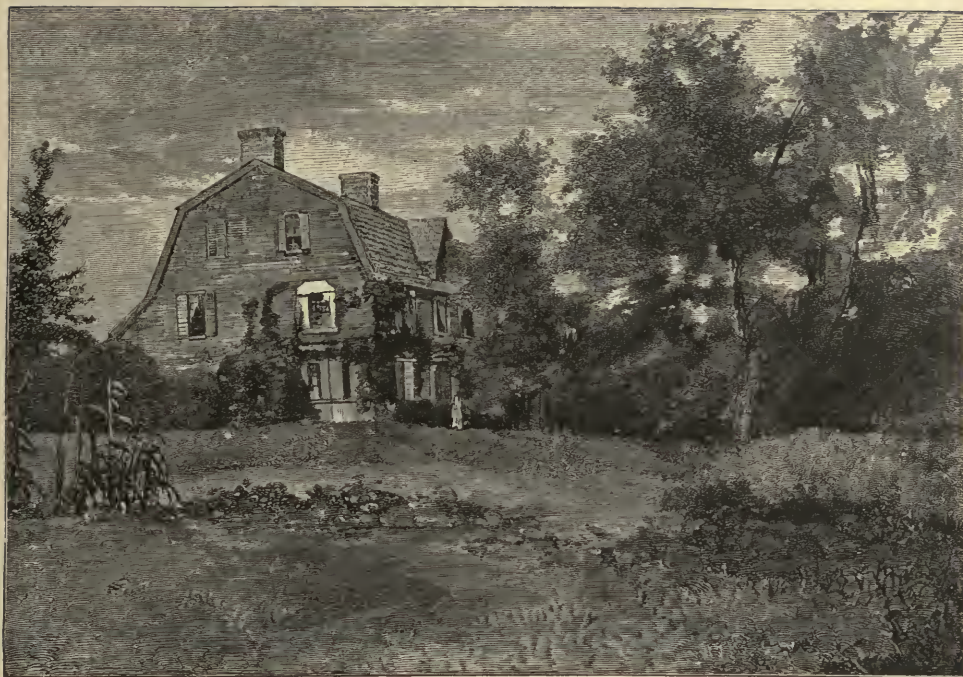
I see the inundation sweet,  
I hear the spending of the stream  
through years, through men, through Nature  
Through passion, thought, <sup>fleet:</sup> through power and dream.

R. W. Emerson

Concord, Massachusetts -  
December 10, 1878.







THE OLD MANSE.

## RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

It was said by a friend who stood by Thoreau's grave, before Hawthorne had been buried near him on the hill-side where he sleeps in Concord, "This village is his monument, covered with suitable inscriptions by himself." In future years—when the pilgrim shall stand on the same pine-covered hill-top, where, a little higher up, as befits his genius, will be seen the grave of Emerson—it can be said with even greater truth, that Concord itself is the monument of him who wrote,

"By the rude bridge that arched the flood,"

and that other song, unfathomed in the depth of its sadness, whose closing strain is,

"The silent organ loudest chants  
The Master's requiem."

For Concord is not only inscribed in all its tranquil scenery—its woods and fields and waters—with memories of Emerson, the poet, but is also a family monument to his ancestors, the Bulkeleys and Emersons and Blisses; pious ministers who founded it, prayed for it, and preached in it, helped to rescue it from Indian ambush and English invasion, and then laid their bones there to become part of its soil, and to dignify the plain earth which had nourished them. The history of the town is indeed that of Emerson and his forefathers; and it is better known by his fame than through any other distinction it may now enjoy. It is here that the pilgrim shall say as the Persian disciple said of his master, “The eagle of the immaterial soul of Saadi hath shaken from his plumage the dust of the body.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson is the eighth in descent from the Rev. Peter Bulkeley, rector of Odell or Woodhill, in English Bedfordshire, where the Ouse, they say, pours a winding flood through green meadows, much as the Musketaquid now does in his American colony. This Puritan minister, unwilling to obey the bishops of Charles Stuart, emigrated to Massachusetts, in 1634, with several of his English flock, and, in company with Major Simon Willard, a Kentish man, planted the town of Concord in September, 1635. He was the first minister of the church which he gathered there, and, at his death in 1659, transmitted his sacred office to his son, Rev. Edward Bulkeley, whose daughter, Elizabeth, born in Concord in 1638, married Rev. Joseph Emerson in 1665, and became the mother of a long line of ministerial Emersons. Her son, Edward Emerson, born in Concord in 1670, married Rebecca Waldo, of Chelmsford, in 1697, from whom the present Mr. Emerson derives both his descent and his middle name, by which he has commonly been called. The Emersons and Waldos, unlike the Bulkeleys, first settled in Ipswich, and were not originally clergymen. Thomas Emerson, the first American ancestor of the poet, is supposed to be descended from the Emersons of Durham, in England, and perhaps from that Ralph Emerson in the county palatine of Durham who, in 1535, received from Henry VIII a grant of the heraldic arms which the family of Ralph Waldo Emerson have inherited—three



lions passant, with a demi-lion holding a battle-axe for crest.\* The Waldos claim descent from Peter Waldo, a leading man among those early Protestants known as Waldenses; their first American ancestor was Cornelius, of Ipswich and Chelmsford, the father of Rebecca Emerson. These Waldos had been merchants in London. The Bulkeleyes were of gentle blood, and related to the family of Oliver St. John, the Parliamentary leader and friend of Cromwell, whom Rev. Peter Bulkeley calls his nephew.

In New England, since Thomas Emerson's death, in 1666, his descendants have taken to the Christian ministry as remarkably as the Cottons or the Mathers. Mr. Emerson, of Concord, his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, of that name, were all ministers, and he has a clerical ancestor in every generation, on one side or the other, as far back as Fox's "*Book of Martyrs*," to which one of those ancestors wrote a supplement. Mr. Emerson himself was born in Boston, May 25, 1803; his father, Rev. William Emerson, being at that time and until his death, in 1811, minister of the First Church congregation, which John Cotton had gathered in 1630. This church in 1803 assembled in the Old Brick Meeting-house on Washington Street, close by the Old State-house, but soon removed to a site near the parsonage house, at the corner of Summer and Chauncy Streets, in which Mr. Emerson was born. This house has been taken down, and so has the new parsonage house on the same estate, in which Mr. Emerson spent his childhood. His father, Rev. William Emerson, of Boston, was born at Concord, in the parsonage house of his father, Rev. William Emerson, of Concord, famous as the Old Manse, since Hawthorne lived and wrote under its gambrel roof. It was then, a few years before the Revolution, a new and fine house, built for the young minister of Concord and his bride, Miss Phebe Bliss, the daughter of his predecessor in the parish, Rev. Daniel Bliss. The sketches

\* This escutcheon was carved on the tombstone of Nathaniel Emerson (brother of Rev. Joseph Emerson) at Ipswich, Massachusetts, where he died in 1712, at the age of eighty-three. In 1709, Richard Dale, a London herald, certified this as the correct escutcheon, and it has since been used by some branches of the Emerson family.

given with this paper of its exterior and interior represent it as little different from what it was in 1775, when Mr. Emerson's grandfather



THE EMERSON HOUSE.

went forth from its front door early on the morning of Concord fight, to join the farmers at their muster on his meeting-house green. It was in the same condition sixty years later when Ralph Waldo Emerson went to live in it, as he had done at intervals before.

About 1780, the widow of Rev. William Emerson, of Concord, married his successor in the parish, Dr. Ripley, who thus became the guardian of young William Emerson and his sisters. When, some thirty years after, Rev. William Emerson, of Boston, died, leaving six or seven young children, of whom Ralph Waldo was the third in age, Dr. Ripley's parsonage at Concord became a second home to them—their own home continuing in Boston and Cambridge until 1834, when, upon his return from England, Mr. R. W. Emerson took up his abode permanently in Concord. For a year or so he lived at the Old



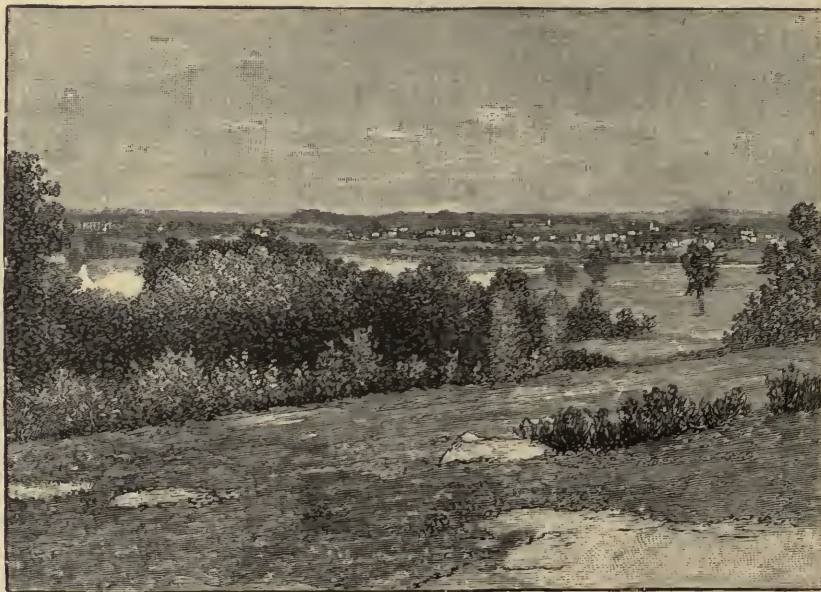
Manse with his grandfather, Dr. Ripley, and there his first book, "Nature," was chiefly written. In the latter part of 1835, after his marriage with Miss Lidian Jackson, of Plymouth, he took possession of his own home on the Lexington road, east of the village, not far from the Walden woods, and has lived there ever since. The house was partially destroyed by fire a few years ago, but was rebuilt in its former shape and aspect. It stands among trees, with a pine grove across the street in front, and a small orchard and garden reaching to a brook in the rear. On the southeast side, from which the preceding sketch is taken, it looks toward another orchard, on the edge of which formerly stood the picturesque summer-house built for Mr. Emerson in 1847-'48 by his friend Mr. Bronson Alcott, but now for some years decayed and removed. The house itself is of wood—a modest, home-like, comfortable residence, with small outlook, narrow grounds, and at some distance from Walden pond and the river—the two features of Concord scenery best known to the world, because most fully described by Thoreau and Hawthorne.

Mr. Emerson had dwelt in this home for seven years when Hawthorne, immediately upon his marriage with Miss Sophia Peabody in 1842, went to live in the Old Manse, of which he has given so charming a description. The general features of the landscape have also been described by him, as well as by Thoreau, by Ellery Channing, the poet, by Bronson Alcott, and by Emerson himself. Hawthorne said in 1843: "The scenery of Concord has no very marked characteristics, but a great deal of quiet beauty, in keeping with the river. There are broad and peaceful meadows, which, I think, are among the most satisfying objects in natural scenery. The heart reposes on them with a feeling that few things else can give, because almost all other objects are abrupt and clearly defined; but a meadow stretches out like a small infinity, yet with a secure homeliness which we do not find either in an expanse of water or of air. The hills which border these meadows are wide swells of land, or long and gradual ridges, some of them densely covered with wood. The white village appears



to be embosomed among wooded hills. The river is one of the loveliest features in a scene of great rural beauty."

The sketch, "Concord from Lee's Hill," is taken from one of these hills, and gives quite as much distinctness to the river and its meadows as to the village itself, beyond which, as this picture is drawn, lie the hill-side grave of Hawthorne and the houses of Emerson and Alcott.



CONCORD FROM LEE'S HILL.

From the hill Nahshawtuc, on which the artist sat to sketch this view (and where the Indians used to encamp, between the two rivers, Assabet and Musketaquid, which flow under its north and south sides to form the Concord), one may see in the spring freshets that prospect which Thoreau described :

“ Our village shows a rural Venice,  
Its broad lagoons where yonder fen is ;  
As lovely as the Bay of Naples  
Yon placid cove amid the maples ;  
And in my neighbor's field of corn  
I recognize the Golden Horn.”

It was proposed by Thoreau that Concord should adopt for its coat-of-arms "a field verdant, with the river circling nine times round"; and he compared the slow motion of the stream to "the moccasined tread of an Indian warrior." Channing—who, since he came to reside in Concord, in 1841, has rambled over every foot of its ground with Thoreau, with Hawthorne, or with Emerson, and is one of the few persons who, as Thoreau thought, "understood the art of walking, that is, of taking walks; who had a genius, so to speak, for *sauntering*"—Channing sings of these

" Peaceful walks  
O'er the low valleys, seamed with long-past thrift,  
And crags that beetle o'er the base of woods  
By rock and hill, low stream, and surly pitch  
Of never-opening oaks."

But Emerson himself, the first poet of Concord, if not of America, has drawn the landscape so familiar to him with the most truthful touches:

" Because I was content with these poor fields,  
Low, open meads, slender and sluggish streams,  
And found a home in haunts which others scorned,  
The partial wood-gods overpaid my love,  
And granted me the freedom of their state.  
For me in showers, in sweeping showers, the spring  
Visits the valley ;—break away the clouds,—  
I bathe in the morn's soft and silvered air,  
And loiter willing by yon loitering stream ;  
Beneath low hills, in the broad interval  
Through which at will our Indian rivulet  
Winds, mindful yet of sannup and of squaw,  
Whose pipe and arrow oft the plow unburies.  
Sparrows far off, and nearer, April's bird,  
Blue-coated, flying before from tree to tree,  
Courageous, sing a delicate overture  
To lead the tardy concert of the year.  
Onward and nearer rides the sun of May,

And wide around the marriage of the plants  
 Is sweetly solemnized. Then flows amain  
 The surge of summer's beauty ; dell and crag  
 Hollow and lake, hill-side and pine arcade,  
 Are touched with genius. Yonder ragged cliff  
 Has thousand faces in a thousand hours."

Such is the picture presented to serene and hopeful eyes ; but there is a different landscape, veiled with a sadder hue, which the same eyes have sometimes seen.

" In the long, sunny afternoon,  
 The plain was full of ghosts ;  
 I wandered up, I wandered down,  
 Beset by pensive hosts.

" The winding Concord gleamed below,  
 Pouring as wide a flood  
 As when my brothers, long ago,  
 Came with me to the wood.

" But they are gone, the holy ones,  
 Who trod with me this lovely vale ;  
 The strong, star-bright companions  
 Are silent, low, and pale.

" I touch this flower of silken leaf  
 Which once our childhood knew ;  
 Its soft leaves wound me with a grief  
 Whose balsam never grew."

Those whom Emerson commemorates in these lines were his earliest companions, his brothers Edward and Charles, with whom he rambled among the Concord woods and streams in his boyhood and youth, from 1816 to 1836, when his youngest brother Charles died. A few years later—perhaps in 1838—his friend Alcott began to walk the hill-tops and wood-paths with him ; in 1839 he became intimate



with his young townsman, Henry Thoreau, then just setting forth with his brother John to explore the rivers Concord and Merrimac; and in 1841 Ellery Channing, returning eastward from the prairies of Illinois and the banks of the Ohio, made his home in a cottage not far from Mr. Emerson's house. Hawthorne, as before mentioned, came first in 1842; he left Concord for Salem in 1846, but returned thither twice, in 1852, and, finally, in 1860, when he came back from England. Between 1836 and 1846 Margaret Fuller was a frequent visitor in Concord, and a companion of Mr. Emerson and his friends. Hawthorne's notebook records that in August, 1842, while returning through the woods from Mr. Emerson's house to the Old Manse, he encountered Margaret reading under a tree in "Sleepy Hollow"—the little park that has since become a cemetery, in which Hawthorne himself is buried. As they sat talking on the hillside, not far from his future grave, "we heard," he says, "footsteps on the high bank above us, and, while the person was still hidden among the trees, he called to Margaret. Then he emerged from his green shade, and, behold! it was Mr. Emerson, who said 'there were Muses in the woods to-day, and whispers to be heard in the breezes.' It being now nearly six o'clock, we separated—Mr. Emerson and Margaret toward his home, and I toward mine."



THE OLD NORTH BRIDGE REBUILT.

This anecdote may serve to call attention to a habit of Emerson, in which he agrees with Wordsworth. When a traveler asked to see the old poet's study, his servant answered: "Here is Mr. Wordsworth's *library*, but his *study* is out-of-doors." It was for many years Mr. Emerson's custom to pass his mornings in his library, and his afternoons in the open air, walking alone or with a friend across the pastures and through the woods which encircle the village on all sides. Behind the first range of these woods to the southward lies the fair lake called Walden, along whose shores Mr. Emerson owns some acres of woodland, so that he may look upon Walden as his own domain. His favorite walk has been to these woods and around this pond; and on the farther shore, opposite the cove where Thoreau built his cabin in 1845, Mr. Emerson once purposed to build a lodge or summer-house, for study and for the lovely prospect. The sketch of Walden Pond, which we give, was drawn from a point in the Emerson wood-lot, looking southeast across the water to the Emerson wood-lot on the other side, where the lodge, had it been built, was to stand. For some years, just before Thoreau's death, in 1862, Mr. Emerson kept his boat in the cove beside which his friend's cabin had stood, and from this they now and then rowed forth together.

" Here sometimes gliding in his peaceful skiff  
 Climené sails, heir of the world, and notes  
 (In his perception that no thing escapes)  
 Each varying pulse along Life's arteries,  
 Both what she half resolves, and half effects,  
 As well as her whole purpose. To his eye,  
 The stars of many a midnight heaven have beamed  
 Tokens of love, types of the soul. He saw  
 In those far-moving barks on Heaven's sea,  
 Radiates of force; and while he moved from man  
 Lost on the eternal billow, still his heart  
 Beat with some natural fondness for his race."

As Mr. Emerson was one day walking with a young friend along the railroad track that dikes Walden on the southwest, he threw a

stone into the green water and repeated his own lines, which had not then been printed :

“ He smote the lake to please his eye  
With the beryl beam of the broken wave ;  
He flung in pebbles, well to hear  
The moment’s music which they gave.”

In one of his later poems, called “My Garden,” he thus speaks of Walden and its wooded banks :

“ My garden is a forest ledge  
Which older forests bound ;  
The banks slope down to the blue lake edge,  
Then plunge to depths profound.

“ Waters that wash my garden side  
Play not in Nature’s lawful web,  
They heed not moon or solar tide—  
Five years elapse from flood to ebb.”

The allusion here is to the mysterious rise and fall of the water in Walden, quite regardless of rain or drought, being sometimes at its highest in a dry summer, and at its lowest when all other streams and ponds are full. It seems to be fed by secret springs, and to have a hidden outlet.

When, at one period in his life, it became necessary for Mr. Emerson to decide in what town or city he would fix his abode, he said, “I am by nature a poet, and, therefore, must live in the country.” His choice of Concord for a home was simple and natural ; it had been the home of his ancestors, the paradise of his childhood, and no other scenery could have been more in harmony with his genius. He found there the familiar beauty of nature and the freedom from social forms which the idealist needs ; while his native city was still so near that he could resort to it or welcome his friends from it as often as his way of life required. For a few years before establishing himself in Con-



cord, in 1834, he had been the minister of a parish in Boston, and for some years after his retirement there he continued to preach occasionally in pulpits not far from home. Gradually his pulpit became the lecture platform, from which, in Boston and in a hundred other cities and villages, he read those essays that, since 1840, have appeared in his books. His poems first began to be printed in the "Dial," a quarterly review established by him and his friends in 1840, and continuing four years. The first volume of poems was published in 1847; the second in 1867; a third, containing the most, but not all of these two volumes, came out in 1876, with a few new poems, the most important of which was his "Boston," first read at Faneuil Hall in December, 1873, when the poet had more than completed his three-score years and ten. It had been written about ten years earlier, however, as part of a longer poem not yet published. Several of his poems have long remained unpublished, among them one read in Cambridge more than forty years ago. He began to write verses very early, and, in the biography of his friend, Mrs. Samuel Ripley, we find the first of his lines that were ever printed. They are a translation made in May, 1814, when he was just eleven years old, from the fifth eclogue of Virgil. The passage translated begins:

*"Sed tu desine plura puer; successimus antro.  
Extinctum Nymphæ crudeli funere Daphnin  
Flebant: vos coruli testes, et flumina Nymphis."*

This is Waldo Emerson's version of it, if, as I suppose, he translated it, and did not copy from some elder translator:

"Turn now, O youth! from your long speech away;  
The bower we've reached recluse from sunny ray.  
The Nymphs with pomp have mourned for Daphnis dead;  
The hazels witnessed and the rivers fled.  
The wretched mother clasped her lifeless child,  
And gods and stars invoked with accents wild.  
Daphnis! The cows are not now led to streams  
Where the bright sun upon the water gleams,

Neither do herds the cooling river drink,  
Nor crop the grass upon the verdant brink.  
O Daphnis ! Both the mountains and the woods,  
The Punic lions and the raging floods  
All mourn for thee—for thee who first did hold  
In chariot reins the spotted tiger bold !”

There are ten more lines, but these are enough to show the smoothness of the verse and the freedom of the translation. It was written in continuation of a version made by Mrs. Ripley herself (then Miss Sarah Bradford), whose letter accompanying her own verses furnishes an agreeable picture of the young poet's occupations at the Boston Latin School. Miss Bradford, then not quite twenty-one years old, had read by herself and for her own delight not only Virgil and Horace and Juvenal in Latin, but Homer, Theocritus, Euripides, and Sophocles in Greek, and Tasso in Italian. She writes thus to her friend's nephew, who afterward became her own nephew by marriage :

“MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND : You love to trifle in rhyme a little now and then ; why will you not continue this versification of the fifth Bucolic ? You will



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answer two ends, or, as the old proverb goes, kill two birds with one stone—improve in your Latin, as well as indulge a taste for poetry. Why can't you write me a letter in Latin? But Greek is your favorite language; *Epistola in lingua Græca* would be still better. All the honor will be on my part, to correspond with a young gentleman in Greek. Only think of how much importance I shall feel in the literary world! Tell me what most interests you in Rollin; in the wars of contending princes, under whose banners you enlist, to whose cause you ardently wish success. Write me with what stories in Virgil you are most delighted. Is not that a charming one of Nisus and Euryalus? I suppose you have a Euryalus among your companions; or don't little boys love each other as well as they did in Virgil's time? How beautifully he describes the morning! 'Do write to your affectionate friend

SARAH." \*

Amid such pursuits as this letter indicates, Waldo Emerson passed his boyhood, in his native city of Boston, then a town of greater fame than magnitude or wealth, but of a greater spirit than either. As he then saw it he has sung it, and the memory of that Boston will be best preserved in his nervous lyrical verse:

“ The rocky nook with hill-tops three  
Looked eastward from the farms,  
And twice each day the flowing sea  
Took Boston in its arms;

\* Miss Bradford married the uncle of Waldo Emerson, Rev. Samuel Ripley, in 1818, and lived in his parish of Waltham until the spring of 1846, when they removed to the Old Manse in Concord, which Hawthorne had just left vacant. It had been the early home of Mr. Ripley, whose father, Rev. Dr. Ripley, had married Mrs. Emerson, grandmother of Waldo Emerson. In this picturesque residence Mrs. Ripley spent the rest of her life, dying at the age of seventy-four. She continued to be one of the most intimate friends of Mr. Emerson and his circle of companions, and for many years she spent her Sunday evenings at his house. She was the most learned woman ever seen in New England, and, at the same time, the sweetest and the most domestic. Closely associated with her for more than twenty years was Miss Elizabeth Hoar (a sister of Judge Hoar and of Senator Hoar, and the betrothed of Charles Emerson, who died in 1836)—a woman also of much learning, of a tender and self-renouncing nature, and of the warmest affections. These ladies, with Mrs. Emerson, and with the younger friends and kindred who clustered about them, gave to the society of Concord the perfect charm of womanly grace and domestic sentiment, to which Margaret Fuller added a sibylline quality, and Mrs. Alcott a practical benevolence not less rare. Mrs. Alcott died in 1877, Miss Hoar in 1878, Mrs. Ripley in 1867, and all are buried among the pines on the summit of the slope of the hill where Hawthorne and Thoreau are buried.



The men of yore were stout and poor,  
And sailed for bread to every shore.

“ And where they went, on trade intent,  
They did what freemen can ;  
Their dauntless ways did all men praise,  
The merchant was a man.  
The world was made for honest trade—  
To plant and eat be none afraid.

“ We grant no dukedoms to the few,  
We hold like rights, and shall ;  
Equal on Sunday in the pew,  
On Monday in the Mall.  
For what avail the plow or sail,  
Or land, or life, if freedom fail ?

“ The sea returning, day by day,  
Restores the world-wide mart ;  
So let each dweller on the Bay  
Fold Boston in his heart,  
Till these echoes be choked with snows,  
Or over the town blue ocean flows.

“ Let the blood of her hundred thousands  
Throb in each manly vein ;  
And the wit of all her wisest  
Make sunshine in her brain.  
For you can teach the lightning speech  
And round the globe your voices reach !”

Here the Boston of the eighteenth century finds itself connected with that of the latter half of the nineteenth century, and the period of Emerson's life in that city was the connecting link between the two. Born there in 1803, he left it in 1833, when it had grown from a town of 25,000 to a city of 65,000 ; it now numbers more than 350,000. It has given birth to no poet greater than Emerson, although Poe and Channing, Sprague and the elder Dana, were also

born there; and none of its poets have so well understood and illustrated its peculiar spirit. He breathed in its atmosphere and its traditions as a boy, while he drove his mother's cow to pasture along what are now the finest streets. He learned his first lessons of life in its schools and churches; listened to Webster and Story in its courts, to Josiah Quincy and Harrison Gray Otis in its town-meetings at Faneuil Hall; heard sermons in the Old South Meeting-house, and, in the years of his pastorate in Boston, sometimes preached there. I find, for example, that he gave the "charity lecture" at the Old South on the first Sunday of June, 1832. He was then, and had been for some time, one of the school committee of Boston; a few years earlier he was the chaplain of the Massachusetts Senate. After his graduation at Harvard College, in 1821, he had taught in his brother's school for young ladies, in Boston. This school was in Federal Street, near the church of Dr. Channing, where in after years Mr. Emerson occasionally preached. He studied divinity, nominally with Dr. Channing; but the great preacher of the Unitarians took very little supervision of his studies. His own parish was at the North End, in Hanover Street—the same over which Cotton Mather and his father, Increase Mather, had preached in the time of Franklin. The Boston of history was a small place, and its famous men lived in sight of each other's houses. Franklin was born within gun-shot of where Emerson and Samuel Adams and Wendell Phillips were born; and Morse, the inventor of the electric telegraph, who could "teach the lightning speech," was born in Charlestown, just across the river from Mr. Emerson's parish.

The young scholar who, at the age of eleven, loved "to trifle in rhyme," and whose favorite language was Greek, entered college at fourteen and was graduated at eighteen. He continued to write verses during his boyhood and youth, and in college wrote two poems as exercises, one of which was to be given at a public exhibition. Being required to show this to his professor (who was Edward Channing, brother of the famous Dr. Channing), the only criticism made upon it was, "You had better write another poem." "What a use-

less remark was that!" said Mr. Emerson, afterward; "he might at least have pointed out to me some things in my verses that were better than others, for all could not have been equally bad." He added that he received at college very little instruction or criticism from the professors that was of value to him, except from Edward Everett, who was then Greek professor, and who had newly returned from Europe, full of learning and enthusiasm. For a year his tutor in mathematics was Caleb Cushing, since so conspicuous in Massachusetts politics. In studying divinity, from 1823 to 1827, he heard the lectures of Professor Norton, and derived benefit from his criticisms. He profited most, however—as he thought, and as his sermons will show—from the preaching and the conversation of Dr. Channing, of whom he has spoken as one of the three most eloquent men he ever heard, the others being Daniel Webster and Wendell Phillips. His own pulpit eloquence was singularly attractive, though by no means equally so to all persons. In 1829, before the two friends had met, Mr. Bronson Alcott heard him preach in Dr. Channing's church, on "The Universality of the Moral Sentiment," and was much struck, as he said, "with the youth of the preacher, the beauty of his elocution, and the direct and sincere manner in which he addressed his hearers." This particular sermon was probably one that he had written in July, 1829, concerning which he had said to a friend, while writing it: "I am striving hard to-day to establish the sovereignty and self-existent excellence of the Moral Law in popular argument, *and slay the Utility swine.*" It is possible, therefore, that he may have taken a tone toward the Utilitarians which gave some ground for a remark made, not long after, by the wife of a Boston minister with whom Mr. Emerson exchanged. "Waldo Emerson came last Sunday," said this lady, "and preached a sermon for George with his chin in the air, in scorn of the whole human race." But the usual tone of his discourses could never justify this peevish criticism. Some years later, when he was preaching plain sermons to a small country congregation at Lexington, which was waiting to settle another minister (Mr. Emerson having declined to settle there), some one asked a



woman in the parish why they had not invited Mr. A—— (a learned and eloquent preacher, since become famous). She replied, with the greatest sincerity, "You do not consider what a simple, plain people we are; we can hardly understand any minister except Mr. Emerson." Only two or three of the sermons preached by him have ever been printed. That which he gave in his church September 9, 1832, when resigning his pastorate because of his scruples concerning the rite of the Lord's Supper, has been published in Mr. Frothingham's "*Transcendentalism in New England.*"

Mr. Emerson began preaching as a candidate, and for the supply of pulpits casually vacant, in 1827. In November of that year he preached three Sundays for Dr. Dewey, then settled in New Bedford; and on Thanksgiving Day he preached for his uncle, Rev. Mr. Ripley, at Waltham. In April, 1828, he supplied the Concord pulpit of Dr. Ripley for two Sundays, and attended funerals and other pastoral services during his grandfather's absence at the South. Later in the year 1828 he was invited to become the colleague of Rev. Henry Ware, Jr., in the Second Church at Boston, and accepted the call. He was ordained there early in 1829, Dr. Ripley giving the "charge" upon that occasion.\* In course of it he said: "It may be asked 'Why is this service assigned to one so aged, and so little conversant in this metropolis?' Because I was the friend and successor of your excellent grandfather, and became the legal parent and guardian of his orphan children; because I guided the youthful days, directed the early studies, introduced into the ministry, witnessed the celebrity, and deeply lamented the early death of your beloved father; and because no clergyman present can feel a livelier interest or purer joy on seeing you risen up in his stead, and taking part with us in this ministry in your native city, where his eloquent voice is still

Mr. Emerson had asked Doctor Ripley to preach his ordination sermon, as he had preached that of his father, Rev. William Emerson, at Harvard in 1792, but his aged kinsman declined, saying, "My son Sam has never been invited to preach an ordination sermon; I should prefer you would ask him." Rev. Samuel Ripley therefore preached the sermon, and his father gave the charge.

remembered, and his memory affectionately cherished.\* Of the son he said: "We cheerfully express our joy at the ordination of one whose moral, religious, and literary character is so fair and promising. We cherish the expectation that you will make laudable progress in everything good and excellent—that you will be a wise teacher and an affectionate pastor. Your life must be a continuous lecture on piety and goodness, on personal virtues and relative duties. Your religion must be carried into the elegant houses of the opulent, and the humble dwellings of the poor. You must be quick to discern and embrace opportunities to instruct the youth, to teach the children, and, like our Saviour, to take little ones into your arms and bless them. This branch of duty will be easier to you than to most ministers, both from natural disposition and habit." And then, as if with the spirit of prophecy, this venerable man added: "Professing Christians may censure you, and exclude you from the arms of their charity. You will find it a serious trial to be deemed and treated as one whose belief and preaching are dangerous to the souls of your hearers; to be daily misrepresented, and your usefulness impeded; to be denied the Christian name, and pointed at before ignorant people as a moral pestilence." This is what did in fact happen to Mr. Emerson after he found himself unable to accept the creed and perform the rites of the sect to which he belonged; and a painful controversy, in which he took little part, followed the preaching of his sermon explaining his personal views of the Lord's Supper, in September, 1832.

He finally bade farewell to his Boston parish in December, 1832, and early in 1833 embarked on his first voyage to Europe. He sailed

\* Pulpit eloquence and literary skill were hereditary in the Emerson family. Both the father and the grandfather of Mr. R. W. Emerson were noted for these. An aunt of his was once passing through Concord in the stage-coach, not long after the Revolution, when one of her fellow-passengers, a stranger, inquired who preached in the village church, which he saw from the window. Being told that it was the successor of Rev. William Emerson, of Concord, he said: "I once heard that minister preach in that church the most eloquent sermon I ever listened to"—a compliment to her father which greatly pleased Miss Mary Emerson. This lady had much to do with the early education of Mr. R. W. Emerson and his brothers, and was herself one of the best writers of her time.



up the Mediterranean in a vessel bound for Sicily, and went as far eastward as Malta. Returning through Italy, France, and England, he was at Florence in May, 1833, and in July he reached London.

Mr. Emerson's health, which had always been delicate, and which in 1832 had been greatly affected by bereavement and controversy, was quite restored by this sea-voyage, and his intellectual horizon was widened by the experiences of travel. In Florence he met Horatio Greenough, the first great American sculptor, and dined with Walter Savage Landor, then "living in a cloud of pictures at his Villa Gherardesca." In London he saw Wellington in Westminster Abbey, at the funeral of Wilberforce, and called on Coleridge. He made a



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pilgrimage to the North to visit Wordsworth at Rydal Mount, and Carlyle at Craigenputtock, in Scotland, where, in a sort of exile, six-



teen miles from Dumfries, in Nithsdale, "amid desolate, heathery hills, the lonely scholar nourished his mighty heart." Carlyle afterward spoke of that visit as if it were the coming of an angel; and from that day onward the two friends corresponded with each other. In sight of Wordsworth's country, in August, 1833, Carlyle and Emerson "sat down and talked of the immortality of the soul." Had Goethe been living then, the young American "might have wandered into Germany also;" but, as it was, he returned to Boston in October, and the next year withdrew from his native city to Concord, as already mentioned. It was not at this withdrawal that he wrote the often-quoted "Good-bye, proud world! I'm going home"—in which occurs this contrast between the city and the country:

" Good-bye to Flattery's fawning face,  
To Grandeur with his wise grimace;  
To upstart Wealth's averted eye,  
To supple Office low and high;  
To crowded halls, to court and street;  
To frozen hearts and hasting feet;  
To those who go, and those who come;  
Good-bye, proud world! I'm going home.

" I am going to my own hearth-stone,  
Bosomed in yon green hills alone—  
A secret nook in a pleasant land,  
Whose groves the frolic fairies planned;  
Where arches green, the livelong day,  
Echo the blackbird's roundelay,  
And vulgar feet have never trod  
A spot that is sacred to thought and God."

These verses were written at an earlier date, in Newton, near Boston, where Mr. Emerson spent a summer or two. But they apply very well to his subsequent retirement to Concord.

In his retreat at Concord, the poet's inspiration, which had been felt but little during the period of Mr. Emerson's theological studies and pastoral duties, revisited him, and constantly returned for thirty

years. When, in his twenty-first year, he sent a Christmas poem to a friend, he said: "If it were not that my Muse unluckily caught cold and died a few years since, these verses would be better."

From that time (1823) to 1835, few poems were written by him that he has owned or published. Some verses on "Fame" belong to this period, and the graceful verses to "Helen at the South" were written before 1830. But from 1835 (when he first appeared as an author of aught but sermons) his verses began to be remarkable, though few. In April, 1836, he wrote the hymn for the dedication of the Concord battle-monument, in which occurs the immortal line :

"And fired the shot heard round the world."

In the same year he published "Nature," his first book, which is a prose poem from beginning to end, and which contains a few of those sententious couplets that were afterward so common in his volumes.

"A subtle chain of countless rings,  
The next unto the farthest brings :  
The eye reads omens where it goes,  
And speaks all languages the rose.  
And, striving to be man, the worm  
Mounts through all the spires of form."

It is to an earlier period than this that some of the love-poems belong—that, for example, "To Eva," and those lines which, if we did not find them in his book, we should hardly suspect to be Emerson's, called "The Amulet." These two poems he retains in the latest printed selection from his published and unpublished verses, but excludes another, quite as charming, which may be cited here :

"Thine eyes still shined for me, though far  
I lonely roved the land or sea :  
*As I behold yon evening star,*  
*Which yet beholds not me.*

“ This morn I climbed the misty hill,  
And roamed the pastures through ;  
How danced thy form before my path,  
Amidst the deep-eyed dew !

“ When the red-bird spread his sable wing,  
And showed his side of flame ;  
When the rose-bud ripened to the rose,  
In both I read thy name.”

No poet, ancient or modern, not even Shakespeare or Dante, has more clearly divined or expressed with more profound utterance the nature of love than Emerson, though the poems in which he has expressly dealt with that passion are few. To be a poet is to be a lover, and the feminine Muse is but the unknown quantity in the poet's algebra, by which he expresses now this element, now that, in the indeterminate equation of love. Or, as Emerson better announces this mystery :

“ The sense of the world is short,  
Long and various the report—  
To love and be beloved.”

In another epigram, not yet acknowledged by him, he has said :

“ They put their finger on their lip—  
The Powers above ;  
The seas their islands clip,  
The moons in Ocean dip—  
They love, but name not love.”

In that masterly and mystical lyric, the “ Ode to Beauty ” (first published in the “ Dial ” for October, 1843), he pursues this theme further, and, indeed, to the very limits of human insight :

“ Who gave thee O Beauty  
The keys of this breast—  
Too credulous lover  
Of blest and unblest ?



Say when in lapsed ages  
 Thee knew I of old ?  
 Or what was the service  
 For which I was sold ?  
 When first my eyes saw thee  
 I found me thy thrall,  
 By magical drawings,  
 Sweet tyrant of all !  
*Love drinks at thy fountain*  
*False waters of thirst ;*  
 Thou intimate stranger !  
 Thou latest and first !

“ Queen of things ! I dare not die  
 In Being’s deeps, past ear and eye,  
 Lest there I find the same deceiver,  
 And be the sport of Fate forever.  
 Dread Power, but dear ! if God thou be,  
 Unmake me quite, or give thyself to me ! ”

Here is a flight of love-song beyond Sappho and Anacreon, or the Persian poets, and soaring in another poem (“The Celestial Love”) to a height still more transcendent:

“ To a region where all form  
 In one only Form dissolves ;  
 In a region where the wheel  
 On which all beings ride,  
     Visibly revolves ;  
 Where the starred, eternal worm  
 Girds the world with bound and term ;  
 Where unlike things are like,  
 Where good and ill,  
 And joy and moan,  
     Melt into one.  
 There Past, Present, Future shoot  
 Triple blossoms from one root.”

From this ecstasy the passage is brief into that other kindred mood in which the parable of "Uriel" was written—a myth that perpetually receives and needs interpretation :

" It fell in the ancient periods  
Which the brooding soul surveys,  
*Or ever the wild Time coined itself*  
*Into calendar months and days.*

A sad self-knowledge withering fell  
On the beauty of Uriel ;  
In heaven once eminent, the god  
Withdrew, that hour, into his cloud ;  
Whether doomed to long gyration  
In the sea of generation,  
Or by knowledge grown too bright  
To hit the nerve of feebler sight.  
Straightway a forgetting wind  
Stole over the celestial kind.  
And their lips the secret kept,  
If in ashes the fire-seed slept.

But now and then truth-speaking things  
Shamed the angel's veiling wings ;  
And out of the good of evil born  
Came Uriel's laugh of cherub scorn,  
And a blush tinged the upper sky,  
And the gods shook, they knew not why."

Verses like these revealed to all his discerning readers of poetry that a new poet had appeared, whose every utterance, be it better or worse, was a new surprise. In the same volume which contained the poems cited (published in 1847) appeared also "Merlin," wherein Emerson announced, in words not less dark and profound, his theory of the poet's mission. He was, among other things, to

"mount to Paradise  
By the stair-way of surprise."

Wherever this new poet might be going, that was the stair-way he continually used ; provoking admiration sometimes, sometimes a shudder, but more frequently laughter, among those who did not know him or understand him. The Philistines laughed at his poems in the "Dial," where, from July, 1840, to July, 1844, he printed the best of his earlier verses. In 1843, writing about Wordsworth in this magazine, he said, thinking, perhaps, of his own reception by the American critics : "In the debates on the Copyright Bill, in the English Parlia-



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ment, Mr. Sergeant Wakley, the coroner, quoted Wordsworth's poetry in derision, and asked the roaring House of Commons what that meant, and whether a man should have a public reward for writing such stuff." But Emerson, any more than Wordsworth, never listened to the derision and seldom to the advice of his critics. He would not conform to the age, but wrote on until the age should conform to his genius. As he predicts of the true bard in "Merlin," so he has done before and since :

" He shall not seek to weave,  
In weak, unhappy times,  
Efficacious rhymes ;



Wait his returning strength.  
 Bird, that from the nadir's floor  
 To the zenith's top can soar,  
 The soaring orbit of the Muse exceeds that journey's length.  
 Nor, profane, affect to hit  
 Or compass that, by meddling wit,  
 Which only the propitious mind  
 Publishes when 'tis inclined."

Or, as he wrote in prose, in 1843, when reviewing his friend Carlyle's "Past and Present": "The poet cannot descend into the turbid present without injury to his rarest gifts. Hence that necessity of isolation which genius has always felt. He must stand on his glass tripod if he would keep his electricity." The same doctrine appears again and again in his verse and his prose—in "Saadi," for example, which is his poetic autobiography:

"Now his memory is a den,  
 A sealed tomb from gods and men,  
 Whose rich secrets not transpire;  
 Speech should be like air and fire;  
 But to speak when he assays,  
 His voice is bestial and base;  
 Himself he heareth hiss or hoot,  
 And crimson shame him maketh mute;  
 But whom the Muses smile upon,  
 And touch with soft persuasion,  
 His words, like a storm-wind, can bring  
 Terror and Beauty on their wing.  
 Saadi! so far thy words shall reach,  
 Suns rise and set in Saadi's speech."

One may imagine "Saadi," as first published in the "Dial," and in the three editions of the "Poems" since, to be but the torso of a work from which portions have been broken off here and there—or which, having been wrought out piecemeal, has never been brought together by the author into a single whole. Every now and then,

among the acknowledged or the unacknowledged verses of Emerson, we find fragments of "Saadi," sometimes under other names—for example, these :

" There are beggars in Iran and Araby—  
 SAID was hungrier than all ;  
 Men said he was a fly  
 That came to every festival.

His music was the south wind's sigh,  
 His lamp the maiden's downcast eye,  
 And ever the spell of beauty came  
 And turned the drowsy world to flame.

" Said melted the days in cups like pearl,  
 Served high and low, the lord and the churl ;  
 Loved harebells nodding on a rock,  
 A cabin hung with curling smoke,  
 And huts and tents ; nor loved he less  
 Stately lords in palaces,  
 Fenced by form and ceremony.

" Was never form and never face  
 So sweet to SEYD as only grace  
 Which did not slumber like a stone,  
 But hovered gleaming and was gone.  
 Beauty chased he everywhere—  
 In flame, in storm, in clouds of air.

" While thus to love he gave his days,  
 In loyal worship, scorning praise,  
 How spread their lures for him in vain  
 Thieving Ambition and paltering Gain !  
 He thought it happier to be dead,  
 To die for Beauty than live for bread.

" Said Saadi : ' When I stood before  
 Hassan the camel-driver's door,  
 I scorned the fame of Timour brave—  
 Timour to Hassan was a slave.

In every glance of Hassan's eye  
 I read rich years of victory.  
 And I, who cower mean and small  
 In the frequent interval,  
 When wisdom not with me resides,  
 Worship toil's wisdom that abides.'

“Whispered the Muse in Saadi's cot,  
 ‘O gentle Saadi! listen not  
 (Tempted by thy praise of wit,  
 Or by thirst and appetite  
 For the talents not thine own),  
 To sons of contradiction.  
 Never, son of eastern morning,  
 Follow falsehood, follow scorning.  
 Denounce who will, who will, deny,  
 And pile the hills to scale the sky;  
 Let theist, atheist, pantheist,  
 Define and wrangle how they list,  
 Fierce conserver, fierce destroyer,  
 But thou, joy-giver and enjoyer,  
 Unknowing war, unknowing crime,  
 Gentle Saadi, mind thy rhyme!  
 Heed not what the brawlers say,  
 Heed thou only Saadi's lay.’”

Without taking too literally this ideal portrait of a poet and scholar, it may serve as the picture of Emerson drawn by himself. In accord with this idea, he has resolutely kept within the limits of his genius—has avoided controversy, negation, applause, and the forcing of his talent beyond the measure of its powers. No man has disputed less, few have affirmed more. And while many have written much less than he that the world would gladly read, few have published less, in comparison with the great mass of papers which remain unprinted. Scarcely any of his numerous sermons have ever been published; most of his speeches on political and social occasions remain uncollected and unedited; many verses exist only in manuscript, or have been withdrawn from publication; and even of his lectures, from



which he has printed freely, for nearly forty years, a great many still remain in manuscript. Even those published omit much that was spoken—the fine lectures on History, on Love, and others, displaying so many omissions to those who heard them that the author was at the time sorely complained of by his faithful hearers for leaving out so much that had delighted them. Few or none of the philosophical lectures read at Harvard University eight or nine years ago, and designed to make part of what Mr. Emerson calls “The Natural History of the Intellect,” have ever been printed. This work, when completed, was to be the author’s most systematic and connected treatise. It was

to contain, what could not fail to be of interest to all readers, Mr. Emerson’s observations on his own intellectual processes and methods, of which he has always been studiously watchful, and which, from his habit of writing, he has carefully noted down. From this work, which, even if not finished, will at some time be printed, and from his correspondence of these many years, portions of which will finally be printed, it will be possible to reconstruct hereafter a rare and remarkable episode of literary history.

By far the largest part of all that has flowed from the pen of Emerson was written in the small library represented



in the sketch on page 50. Here, too, the portrait of the poet was drawn by Mr. Eaton, on a recent summer afternoon; while at evening, in the adjoining parlor, to which the doors shown in the engraving lead,

Mr. Alcott and his friend Dr. Jones, the Illinois Platonist, held conversations in a circle of Mr. Emerson's neighbors. In this house, indeed, have occurred more of those famous "conversations" of Mr. Alcott than in any other place. Sometimes these Platonic dialogues have been carried on in the library itself, with the volumes of the Greek master looking down from the shelves upon his New England disciples, and the Sibyls of Raphael, with the Fates of Michael Angelo, glancing from the walls at the utterers of oracles as enigmatical as their own, if not so conclusive. Here have sat Margaret Fuller, Hawthorne, Whittier, Longfellow, Sumner, Thoreau, the Channings, the Lowells, Arthur Hugh Clough, Jones Very, Henry James and his sons, Louisa Alcott, Lord Amberley and his free-thoughted wife, the English Stanleys, the American Bradfords, Theodore Parker, Elizabeth Peabody, Julia Ward Howe, Wendell Phillips, John Brown, Wentworth Higginson, George William Curtis, Bret Harte, and hundreds more who have made for themselves a name in poetry, oratory, art, literature, or politics, in all parts of the world. To many of these men and women, and to thousands that have never distinguished themselves, Concord has been for years a Mecca, toward which their thoughts turned when their steps could not bend thitherward, but which has also been the shrine of their frequent pilgrimage. Hawthorne perceived and felt this tendency when he went, in 1842, to dwell in the Old Manse, and he first, perhaps, described it. "Young visionaries," he said, "to whom just so much of insight had been imparted as to make life all a labyrinth around them, came to seek the clew that should lead them out of their self-involved bewilderment. Gray-headed theorists—whose systems, at first air, had imprisoned them in an iron framework—traveled painfully to his door, not to ask deliverance, but to invite the free spirit into their own thralldom. People that had lighted on a new thought, or a thought that they fancied new, came to Emerson, as the finder of a glittering gem hastens to a lapidary to ascertain its value. For myself, there had been epochs in my life when it, too, might have asked of this prophet the master-word that should solve me the riddle of the universe; but now, being happy, I felt



as if there were no question to be put, and therefore admired Emerson as a poet of deep beauty and austere tenderness, but sought nothing from him as a philosopher." With a clearer per-



THE LEFT-HAND FRONT ROOM OF THE OLD MANSE.

ception, the result of a longer intimacy, the poet Channing has celebrated this part of Emerson's life :

“ Not always went he lonely ; for his thought  
Retained the touch of one whose guest he was—  
A large and generous man, who, on our moors,  
Built up his thought (though with an Indian tongue,  
And fittest to have sung at Persian feasts),  
Yet dwelt among us as the sage he was—



Sage of his days, patient and proudly true—  
 Whose word was worth the world, whose heart was pure.  
 Oh, such a heart was his ! no gate or bar—  
 The poorest wretch that ever passed his door,  
 Welcome as highest king or fairest friend,  
 To all his store, and to the world beside,  
 For if the genius of all learning flamed  
 Aloft in those clear eyes ; if never hour,  
 Nor e'en the smallest instance of his times,  
 Could ever flit, nor give that soul reward ;  
 Yet in his sweet relations with his race  
 Pure mercy lived. . . . .  
 The merest waif, from nothing, cast upon  
 The shores of this rich heart, became a gem,  
 So regal then its setting."

Mr. Alcott also has said his word about this hospitality of the friend, with whom his own name is so inseparably associated that when we think of Alcott we must remember Emerson. Their houses have stood for many years in the same neighborhood—Mr. Alcott's being the very farm-house, under the hill-side on the Lexington road, which Hawthorne takes as the abode of one of his heroes in "Septimius Felton." Like Hawthorne's own "Wayside" just beyond, it long ago received from Alcott's graceful hand alterations and additions that converted the plain cottage into a picturesque home for thought and literature. In this house, embowered in orchards and vines, and overtopped by the familiar pine wood of the Concord landscape, Mr. Alcott once wrote thus concerning Mr. Emerson :

"Fortunate the visitor who is admitted of a morning for the high discourse, or permitted to join the poet in his afternoon walks to Walden, the Cliffs, or elsewhere—hours to be remembered as unlike any others in the calendar of experiences. Shall I describe them as sallies oftenest into the cloud-lands—into scenes and intimacies ever new, none the less novel nor remote than when first experienced?—interviews, however, bringing their own trail of perplexing thoughts—costing some days' duties, several nights' sleep oftentimes, to restore one to his place and poise.

Certainly safer not to venture without the sure credentials, unless one will have his pretensions pricked, his conceits reduced in their vague dimensions. But to the modest, the ingenuous, the gifted—welcome ! nor can any bearing be more poetic and polite to all such—to youth and accomplished women especially. His is a faith approaching to superstition concerning admirable persons, the rumor of excellence of any sort being like the arrival of a new gift to mankind, and he the first to proffer his recognition and hope. He, if any, must have taken the census of the admirable people of his time, numbering as many among his friends as most living Americans ; while he is already recognized as the representative mind of his country, to whom distinguished foreigners are especially commended when visiting America.”

To which may be added Emerson’s own hint in “Saadi”:

“ Simple maids and noble youth  
Are welcome to the man of truth ;  
Most welcome they who need him most,  
They feed the spring which they exhaust,  
For greater need  
Draws better deed ;  
But, critic, spare thy vanity,  
Nor show thy pompous parts  
To vex with odious subtlety  
The cheerer of men’s hearts.”

This poem was written in the fullness of manly strength, near the outset of Emerson’s literary career. Throughout the verses of that period there breathes no thought of age or weakness. They are like the utterance of

“ Olympian bards who sung  
Divine Ideas below,  
Which always find us young  
And always keep us so.”

But age came surely on, though slower than with most men, and was perceived by the poet himself, before any of his listeners saw the autumnal shadow. More than twelve years ago, in his poem “Ter-

minus," Emerson accepted the warning and declared anew, in advance of old age, his youthful faith :

“ Economize the failing river—  
 Not the less adore the Giver ;  
 Leave the many and hold the few.  
 Timely wise, accept the terms,  
 Soften the fall with wary foot ;  
 A little while  
 Still plan and smile,  
 And, fault of novel germs,  
 Mature the unfallen fruit.

. . . . .

As the bird trims her to the gale,  
 I trim myself to the storm of time;  
 I man the rudder, reef the sail,  
*Obey the voice at eve obeyed at prime ;*  
 Lowly faithful, banish fear,  
 Right onward drive unharmed ;  
*The port, well worth the cruise, is near,*  
*And every wave is charmed.”*

Mr. Eaton's portrait well presents the aged poet, now passing into silence, whose voice, from first to last, has been in this lofty key. It will be for posterity to fix his rank among the poets of the world, but that he must rank among them, and in no obscure place, is certain. With that proud humility which distinguishes him among his contemporaries, and in allusion to the few readers that his poems have yet found, he said in October last, "It has been settled that I can not write poetry." The friend to whom he said it asked, "Has that at last been determined?" "Yes, that is the voice of the public." "It was not so reported to me," said his friend ; "I heard that you could write nothing else than poetry." The wise old man smiled, as always when he hears a close reply, and said : "I suppose everybody who writes verses at all has had this experience—you must have had it—they sometimes wrote lucky verses which seem excellent to them-



selves, however they may appear to others—so good that they do not get finished.” His hearer might have responded that the unfinished poems are always the best, that the great world is but one verse in an endless song, and that the briefest fragment of a noble strain is more imperishable than the heavens themselves :

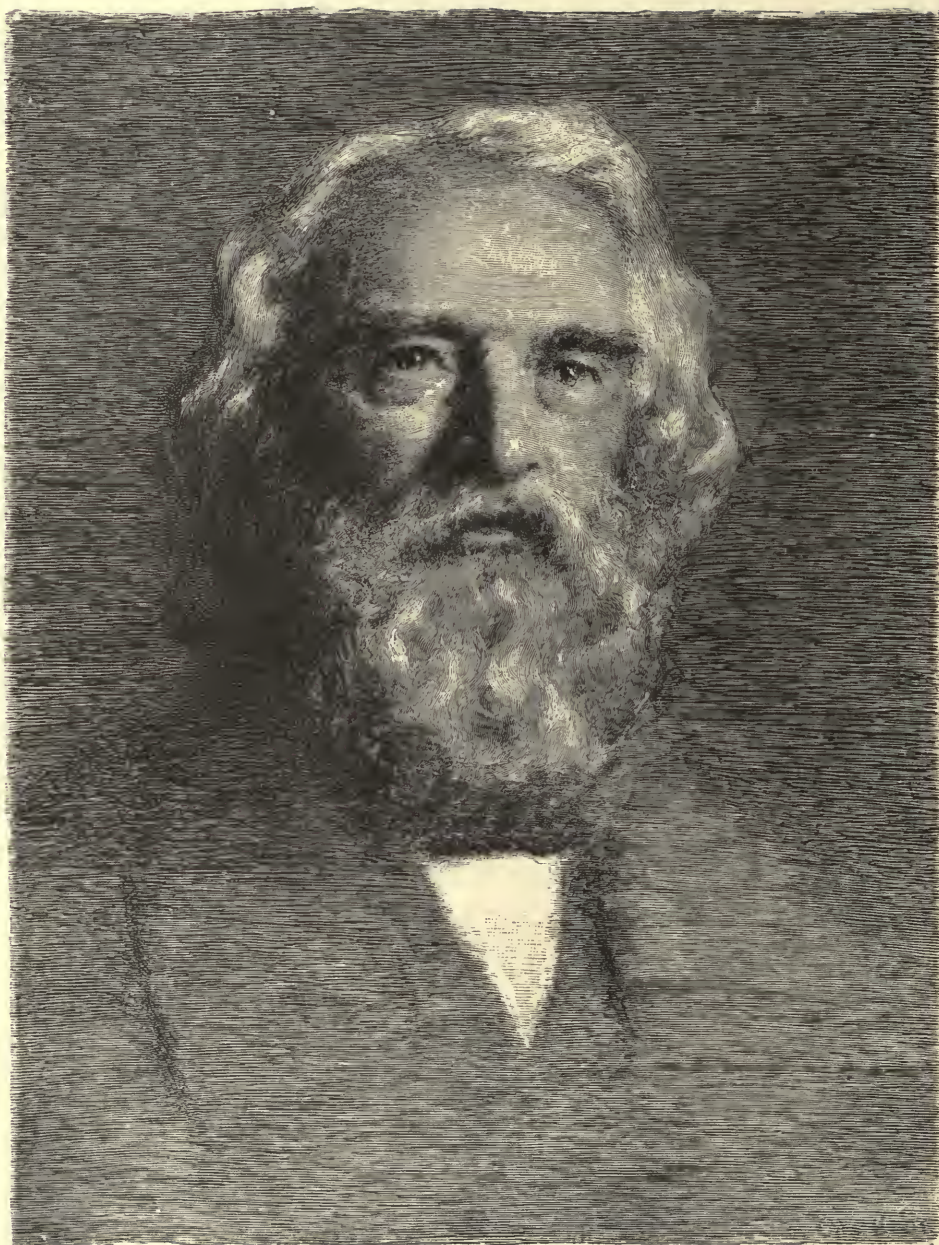
“ An unrequested star did gently slide  
Before the wise men to a greater light.”



GRAVES OF HAWTHORNE AND THOREAU IN SLEEPY HOLLOW CEMETERY.



THE  
LIBRARY  
OF THE  
MUSEUM OF  
COMPARATIVE ZOOLOGY  
AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.



Wm. Pitt Rivers 1876







All are architects of Fate,  
Working in these walls of Time,  
Some with massive deeds and great,  
Some with ornaments of rhyme.

Denny W. Longfellow

Sept. 20. 1878.







LONGFELLOW'S DRAWING-ROOM.

## HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

THE work of most writers, if it be read in the order in which it was produced, and with a careful analysis of its elements, presents, I think, a unity of which the writers themselves were unconscious. Chronological criticism confines itself as strictly to facts as science does, and is not solicitous about results. Its office is to observe what lies on the surface and to discover what underlies it, and, by the two-fold process of observation and discovery, to reach an equitable conclusion in regard to the value of both. We find in all biographies

that all writers, even the greatest, are influenced by their surroundings, and by the books they read; that there are just so many elements in their work, be the same few or many; that their minds are crude before they are mature; that intellectual change is not necessarily intellectual growth; that they recede as well as advance; and, finally, that they do some things much better than others. We find, in a word, that the work of every writer worthy of the name contains some quality which especially pertains to his genius or his talent, and which is characteristic of him and of his work.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was born at Portland, Maine, on the 27th of February, 1807. His father, Mr. Stephen Longfellow, a native of Gorham, Maine, then a District of Massachusetts, was a descendant of William Longfellow, of Newbury, in the same State, who was born in Yorkshire, England, in 1651, and emigrated to this country in early youth. He married Miss Anne Sewell, and after a married life of fourteen years was drowned at Anticosti, a large desert island in the estuary of the St. Lawrence. Mr. Stephen Longfellow, a descendant in the fourth generation of this gentleman, was born in the year in which the colonies declared their independence of the mother country. He was graduated at Harvard College in his twenty-second year, and devoted himself to the law, removing to Portland at the beginning of the present century. He was a good jurist, as the Massachusetts and Maine Reports testify, and was a member of the national Congress when it was an honor to belong to that body. He was also the President of the Maine Historical Society. Such, in brief, was the father of our poet, whose mother was a descendant of John Alden, who must have been a prolific old Puritan, for his children's children have molded the destiny of at least two American poets—William Cullen Bryant and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

When Mr. Longfellow shall have joined the Immortals, and his biography shall be written in full, students of his poetry will know more of his childhood than his contemporaries do now. That he was thoughtfully cared for by his parents is certain, and that his education was an excellent one is equally certain, for he entered Bowdoin



College at the age of fourteen. It was a remarkable class in which he found himself, for it contained, among other men who have arrived at eminence in literature, Nathaniel Hawthorne, George B. Cheever, and J. S. C. Abbott; and he must have distinguished himself, or he would not have received—as he did—the appointment of Professor of Modern Languages and Literatures, shortly after he was graduated, in 1825. He accepted this appointment, with the privilege of going abroad for three years, in order to qualify himself fully for his duties, and the following year saw him traveling on the Continent.

During his last years at college, the future professor of modern literature contributed in a modest way to the poetry of his native land. There was no poet at the time worth speaking of, except Bryant; and there were no periodicals, such as we have to-day, to which young aspirants could send their contributions. Attempts had been made to establish them, but without success, for they either died after a few months' struggle, or were merged in others, which were threatened with dissolution. We had here in New York a "Literary Gazette" (for which Griswold says Sands wrote); then an "Atlantic Monthly"; and then the "New York Review and Athenæum Magazine," of which Bryant was the first editor. This became, by the process of merging, the "New York Literary Gazette and American Athenæum," which culminated in the "United States Literary Gazette." It was in the pages of this last publication, which was issued simultaneously in New York and Boston, that the early poems of the young Bowdoin student were given to the world.

With rare exceptions, early poems are imitative, either of one or more poets whom their writers have read and admired, or of what is most marked in the poetry of the period. A careful reading of the "United States Literary Gazette" would show, I have no doubt, that Mr. Longfellow was not the only American singer, young and old, whose work bore the impress of the author of "Thanatopsis." It is legible in "Autumn," "Sunrise on the Hills," and "The Spirit of Poetry" (I am writing of Mr. Longfellow's early poems), and it is present, in suggestion, in "An April Day," "Woods in Winter," and

"The Burial of the Minnesink." Description of nature is the motive of these pieces, which are written from books rather than from observation. They show an apt ear for versification, and a sensitive temperament, which makes its own individuality felt in the midst of alien poetic influences. Clearly, a new poet had appeared in the "United States Literary Gazette."

European travel was not common among Americans fifty years ago; nor were the places to be visited always determined beforehand.



THE STUDY.

A certain amount of originality was allowed to the tourist, and if he wrote a book about what he saw it was not expected that he should cram it with information. He could be desultory, scholarly, whimsical—he might even be a little dull; what was wanted were his im-



pressions. The time allotted to Mr. Longfellow by his *alma mater* was passed in France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Holland, and England. We have glimpses of what he saw in the first three of these countries, and, in a measure, of his studies and meditations therein. He has not enabled us to follow his itinerary with any certainty, nor do we care to, we have been so pleasantly beguiled by him.

Mr. Longfellow returned to America, and to his duties at Brunswick, and took to himself a wife in his twenty-fourth year. I can not trace the order in which his compositions were written, nor the publications in which they appeared. His first volume, which was published in Boston, in his twenty-sixth year (1833), and is a translation of the "Coplas de Don Jorge Manrique," a thin little twelvemo of eighty-nine pages, which opens with an "Introductory Essay on the Moral and Devotional Poetry of Spain." This scholarly paper contains all that the average reader of forty-five years ago would care to read in regard to the comprehensive subject which it discussed. The preface briefly dismissed the original writer by saying that he followed the profession of arms, as did most Spanish poets of any eminence; that he fought beneath the banner of his father Roderigo Manrique, Conde de Parades, and Maestre de Santiago, and that he died on the field of battle near Cañavete, in the year 1479. This young soldier has rendered imperishable the memory of his father in an ode which is a model of its kind, and which ranks among the world's great funeral hymns. It is admirably translated by Mr. Longfellow, other of whose Spanish studies follow it in the little volume of which I have spoken, in the shape of seven moral and devotional sonnets, two of which are by Lope de Vega, two by Francisco de Aldana, two by Francisco de Medrano, the last, "The Brook," being by an anonymous poet. The sonnets of Medrano, "Art and Nature" and "The Two Harvests," have disappeared from the later editions of Mr. Longfellow's works, and can very well be spared.

The fruits of Mr. Longfellow's three years' residence in Europe were given to the world two years later. If Bryant had been unconsciously his model in his early poems, he can not be said to have had a



model in "Outre-Mer." It has reminded certain English critics of Washington Irving, I fail to see in what respect. It is more scholarly than "The Sketch Book," and the style is sweeter and mellower than



A CORNER OF THE STUDY.

obtains in that famous collection of papers—the writer warbling, like Sidney, in poetic prose. France receives the largest share of his attention and is most lovingly observed, partly for its old-fashioned picturesqueness, but more, I think, because it happened to hit his fancy. In the ninth chapter or section, which glances at "The Trouvères," we have the first French translations by Mr. Longfellow. One is a song in praise of "Spring" by Charles d'Orleans, the other is a copy of verses upon a sleeping child by Clotilde de Surville. They

are elegantly translated, but we feel in reading them that the subtile aroma of their originals has somewhat escaped. They do not suggest the fifteenth, but the nineteenth century.

"Outre-Mer" is interesting to the student of American literature as an excellent example of a kind of prose—half essay and half narrative—which ranks among the things that were. It could not flourish now, nor can it flourish hereafter, but it delighted a literate and sympathetic class of readers forty years ago, to whom it was a pleasant revelation of Old World places, customs, stories, and literatures. It was quietly humorous, it was prettily pathetic, and it was pensive and poetical. Sentimental readers were attracted to the little sketch of "Jacqueline," humorous readers to "Martin Franc and the Monk of Saint Anthony" and "The Notary of Périgueux," and literary readers



THE MANSION.



to "The Trouvères," "Ancient Spanish Ballads," and "The Devotional Poetry of Spain." (The last paper, by the way, was a reprint of the introduction to the "Coplas de Don Jorge Manrique.") Writing in 1878, I can not say that "Outre-Mer" is a remarkable book; but, recalling what American literature was in 1835, I see that it was an important book then; that it deserved all the praise that it obtained; that it was thoroughly representative of the genius of its writer, and that it was indicative of his future career, which is plainly mapped out therein.

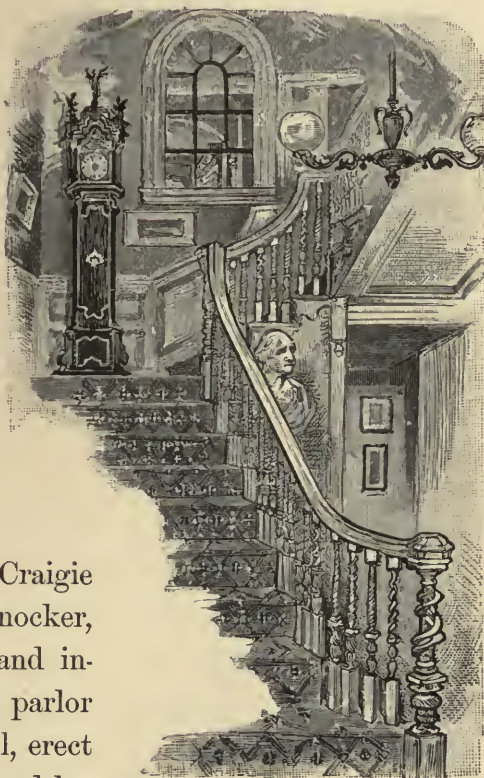
The publication of "Outre-Mer," and his growing reputation as a poet, pointed out Mr. Longfellow as the successor of Mr. George Ticknor, who, in 1835, resigned his professorship of modern languages and literature in Harvard College. He was elected to fill the place of the erudite historian of Spanish literature, and, resigning his chair at Brunswick, he went abroad a second time in order to complete his studies in the literature of Northern Europe. He remained abroad a little over a year, passing the summer in Denmark and Sweden, and the autumn and winter in Germany. The sudden death of his wife at Rotterdam arrested his travel and his studies until the following spring and summer, which were spent in the Tyrol and Switzerland. He returned to the United States in November, 1836, and entered upon his duties at Cambridge, where he has ever since resided.

Mr. Longfellow's house at Cambridge is one of the few American houses to which pilgrimages will be made in the future. It was surrounded with historic associations before he entered it, and it is now surrounded with poetic ones—a double halo encircling its time-honored walls. It is supposed to have been built in the first half of the last century by Colonel John Vassal, who died in 1747, and whose ashes repose in the church-yard at Cambridge under a freestone tablet, on which are sculptured the words *Vas-sol*, and the emblems a goblet and sun. He left a son, John, who lived into Revolutionary times, and was a royalist, as many of the rich colonists were. The house passed from his hands (for a suitable consideration, let us hope) and came into the hands of the provincial government, who allotted it to



General Washington as his head-quarters after the battle of Bunker Hill. Its next occupant was a certain Mr. Thomas Tracy, of whom tradition says that he was very rich, and that his servants drank his costly wines from carved pitchers. He appears to have sent out privateers to scour the seas in the East and West Indies, and to worry the commerce of England and Spain; though why he should include the galleons of Spain in his freebooting voyages is not clear. He failed one day, and the hundred guests who had been accustomed to sit down at the banquets of Vassal house were compelled to find other hosts. Bankrupt Tracy was succeeded by Andrew Craigie, apothecary-general of the northern provincial army, who amassed a fortune in that office, which fortune took to itself wings, though not before it had enlarged Vassal house, and built a bridge over the Charles River connecting Cambridge with Boston, and still bearing his name.

In the summer of 1837 a studious young gentleman of thirty might have been seen wending his way down the elm-shaded path which led to the Craigie house. He lifted the huge knocker, which fell with a brazen clang, and inquired for Mrs. Craigie. The parlor door was thrown open, and a tall, erect figure, crowned with a turban, stood before him. It was the relict of Andrew Craigie, whilom apothecary-general of the dead and gone northern provincial army. The young gentleman inquired if there was a room vacant in her house.



"THE OLD CLOCK ON THE STAIRS."

"I lodge students no longer," she answered gravely.

"But I am not a student," he remarked. "I am a professor in the University."

"A professor?" she inquired, as if she associated learning with age.

"Professor Longfellow," said the would-be lodger.

"Ah! that is different. I will show you what there is."

She then proceeded to show him several rooms, saying as she closed the door of each, "You can not have that." At last she opened the door of the southeast corner room of the second story, and said that he could have it. "This was General Washington's chamber." So Professor Longfellow became a resident of this old historic house, which had been occupied before him by Edward Everett and Jared Sparks, and which was occupied with him by Joseph E. Worcester, the lexicographer. Truly, his lines had fallen in pleasant places.

Professor Longfellow's collegiate duties left him leisure for literary pursuits, and he turned it to advantage by writing a paper on "Friethiof's Saga," and another on the "Twice-told Tales" of his fellow-collegian, Hawthorne, whose rare excellence he was among the first to perceive. These papers were published in the "North American Review," in 1837. They were followed during the next year by other papers; among them one on "Anglo-Saxon Literature," and another on "Paris in the Seventeenth Century," which were contributions to the same periodical. If they are good reading after the lapse of forty years, they must have been better reading when they were first published; for, without vaunting ourselves on our knowledge of other literatures than our own, it is certain that our ancestors knew much less about them than we do; and it is equally certain, as we shall soon see, that our earliest knowledge of German literature—or, at any rate, of German poetry—is largely due to the writings of Mr. Longfellow. His first volume introduced his countrymen to Spanish poetry, as represented by Don Jorge Manrique, Lope de Vega, Francisco de Aldana, and Francisco de Medrano. "Outre-Mer" introduced them to French poetry, in the paper on "The Trouvères," and to ancient Spanish bal-





THE REAR LAWN, LOOKING TOWARD LONGFELLOW'S HOUSE. (ALL THIS PART OF THE LAWN IS COVERED WITH GIGANTIC ELM-TREES. THE HOUSE IS NEARLY HIDDEN BY THE TREES AND LILAC BUSHES.)

lads in the paper on that subject. Bryant had, perhaps, preceded him as a translator from the Spanish poets; but his translations were not of a kind to be popular.

The papers that I have mentioned, or some of them, were written in the chamber which Washington had occupied, as well as a series of papers of which European travel in Germany and Switzerland and European experience and legend were the chief themes. Through these, like a silken string through a rosary of beads, ran a slight personal narrative which may have been real, and may have been imaginary, but which was probably both. This narrative concerned itself with the life-history of Paul Flemming, a tender-hearted and rather shadowy young gentleman, who had lost the friend of his youth, and who had gone abroad that the sea might be between him and the grave. "Alas, between him and his sorrow there could be no sea but that of time!" He wandered from place to place—noting what struck



his sensitive fancy and discoursing of men and books—student at once and pilgrim. The hand that penned “*Outre-Mer*” was visible on every page of “*Hyperion*,” but the hand had grown firmer in the Craigie house than it was at Brunswick; and the scholarly sympathies of the writer had embraced a richer literature than that of old Spain and old France. Dismissing the romantic element of “*Hyperion*” for what it is worth (and there must have been genuine worth in it, for it was the cause of its immediate popularity), the chief and permanent value of the book lay in the new element which it introduced into American literature—the element of German fantasy and romanticism. It would have come in time, no doubt, but to Mr. Longfellow belongs the honor of having hastened the time, and ushered in the dawn. He was the herald of German poetry in the New World. The second book of “*Hyperion*” contains Mr. Longfellow’s first published translation from the German poets—the “*Whither?*” of Müller (“I heard a brooklet gushing”). The third book contains the “*Song of the Bell*” (“Bell, thou soundest merrily!”); “*The Black Knight*” (“’Twas Pentecost, the Feast of Gladness”); “*The Castle by the Sea*” (“Hast thou seen that lordly castle?”); “*The Song of the Silent Land*” (“Intō the Silent Land”); and “*Beware!*” (“I know a maiden fair to see”). Besides these translations in verse, there is, in the first book, a dissertation or chapter on “*Jean Paul, the Only One*,” and in the second book a chapter on “*Goethe*,” whom Mr. Paul Flemming, by the way, does not greatly admire. His friend, the Baron, defends the old heathen by saying that he is an artist and copies nature. “So did the artists who made the bronze lamps of Pompeii. Would you hang one of those in your hall? To say that a man is an artist and copies nature is not enough. There are two great schools of art, the imitative and the imaginative. The latter is the more noble and the more enduring.”

The dignity of the literary profession was earnestly maintained by Mr. Longfellow. “I do not see,” remarked the Baron in one of his conversations with Paul Flemming, “I do not see why a successful book is not as great an event as a successful campaign, only different

in kind, and not easily compared." The lives of literary men are melancholy pictures of man's strength and weakness, and, on that very account, he thought, were profitable for encouragement, consolation, and warning. "The lesson of such lives," continued Flemming, "is told in a single word—wait! Therefore should every man wait—should bide his time. Not in listless idleness, not in useless pastime, not in querulous dejection; but in constant, steady, cheerful endeavors, always willing and fulfilling and accomplishing his task, that, when the occasion comes, he may be equal to the occasion. And, if it never comes, what matters it? What matters it to the world whether I or you or another man did such a deed, or wrote such a book, so that the deed and book were well done? It is the part of an indiscreet and



WEST SIDE OF LONGFELLOW'S HOUSE. (TAKEN FROM A POINT NEAR THE OLD WILLOW.)

troublesome ambition to care too much about fame—about what the world says of us; to be always looking in the faces of others for approval; to be always anxious for the effect of what we do and say; to



be always shouting, to hear the echo of our own voices." "Believe me," he concluded, "the talent of success is nothing more than doing what you can do well, and doing well whatever you do, without a thought of fame. If it come at all, it will come because it is deserved, and not because it is sought after. And, moreover, there will be no misgivings, no disappointment, no hasty, feverish, exhausting excitement."

If fame comes because it is deserved, it certainly comes to some men much sooner than to others; why, their contemporaries and rivals do not perceive as clearly as those who come after them. Mr. Edgar Allan Poe, for example, could never understand why Mr. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was a more successful writer than himself. He might have discovered the reason, however, if he had chosen to look for it, for it lay upon the surface of the American character. Our taste was not profound forty years ago, nor is it very profound now. But then, as now, we knew what we wanted in literature, and we could distinguish what was new from what was old. There was nothing new in Mr. Longfellow's early poems, which were rather promises than performances, but when he began to publish his "Voices of the Night" (in the "Knickerbocker Magazine," I think), we felt that poetry had undergone a change into something rich and strange.

We had taken the measure (so to speak) of the American poets, and knew what to expect from them. Bryant's poetry was calm, meditative, philosophical; Willis's poetry, when not elegantly Scriptural, was light and airy; Halleck's poetry was spirited and martial; Pierpont's poetry was occasional and moral—a few epithets described all our singers that were worthy of the name. We recognized their excellence, but it by no means exhausted our admiration and capacity for enjoyment. There was room for a new poet—there is always room for a new poet, though old poets and old critics and old readers are sometimes slow to admit the fact. There were gardens which yielded our elder singers no flowers—gardens in which no seed of theirs had ever been sown. It remained for a fresh singer to cultivate them. I



hardly know how to characterize the seed which Mr. Longfellow began to sow in "The Voices of the Night." Romanticism does not describe it, for there is nothing romantic in "The Hymn to the Night," nor does morality describe it, except, perhaps, as it bourgeoned in "A Psalm of Life." The lesson of the poem last named and of "The Light of Stars" was the lesson of endurance, and patience, and cheerfulness. It had been taught by other poets, but not as this one taught it, not in verse that set itself to music in the memory of thousands, and in words that were pictures. The young man who wrote "A Psalm of Life" possessed the art of saying remarkable things, and a very rare art it is. Shakespeare possessed it in a supreme degree, and Pope and Gray in a greater measure than greater poets. Merciless critics have pointed out flaws in the literary workmanship of "A Psalm of Life," but its readers never saw them, or, seeing them, never cared for them. They found it a hopeful, helpful poem. "Footsteps of Angels" is to me the most satisfactory of all these "Voices of the Night." There is an indescribable tenderness in it, and the vision of the poet's dead wife gliding into his chamber with noiseless footsteps, taking a vacant chair beside him, and laying her hand in his, is very pathetic. "The Beleaguered City" is a product of poetic artifice of which there are but few examples in English poetry. It appears to have been compounded after a recipe which called for equal parts of outward fact and inward meaning. Given a material city, a river, a fog, and so on, the poet sets his wits to work to discover what corresponds, or can be made to correspond, with them spiritually. If he is skillful, he constructs an ingenious poem, of doubtful intellectual value. "Midnight Mass for the Dying Year" is a medley of mediæval suggestion and Shakespearean remembrance which demands a large and imaginative appreciation. The Shakespearean element strikes me as somewhat out of place, though it adds to the impressiveness and effectiveness as a whole. It is a medley, however, as I have said, and it must be judged by its own fantastic laws. Whatever faults disfigured "The Voices of the Night" were lost sight of, or forgiven for the sake of their beauties and the admirable poetic spirit which they

displayed. A healthful poet was singing, and his song had many tunes.

"Hyperion" and "The Voices of the Night," which were published in the same year (1839), established the reputation of Mr. Longfellow as a graceful prose writer, and a poet who resembled no poet of the time, either in America or England. His scholarship was



THE AVENUE NORTH OF THE HOUSE.

evident in both, and was not among the least of the charms which they exercised over their readers.

Mr. Bryant was the only American poet of any note who had enriched the literature of his native land with translations. They showed his familiarity with other languages, and were well thought of



by scholars, but they added nothing to his fame, for famous he was from the day he published "Thanatopsis." It was otherwise with the translations of Mr. Longfellow, which brought him many laurels, and were in as great demand as his original poems. There were twenty-three of them in the little volume which contained "The Voices of the Night," culled from "Hyperion," "Outre-Mer," his review articles, not forgetting the great ode of Don Jorge Manrique, and they represented six different languages. They were well chosen, with the exception of the two versions from the French, the subjects being in themselves poetical, and the words in which they were clothed characteristic of the originals. The highest compliment that can be paid to Mr. Longfellow is to say that they read like original poems. The most felicitous among them are "The Castle by the Sea," "Whither?" "The Bird and the Ship," and the exquisite fragment entitled "The Happiest Land." Nearly forty years have passed since they were collected in "The Voices of the Night," and these years have seen no translator equal to Mr. Longfellow.

Mr. Longfellow's second poetical venture, "Ballads and Other Poems," determined his character as a poet. It was more mature, not to say more robust, than "The Voices of the Night," and its readers felt sure of its author hereafter, for he felt sure of himself. The opening ballad, "The Skeleton in Armor," was the most vigorous poem that he had yet written—a striking conception embodied in picturesque language, and in a measure which had fallen into disuse for



THE OLD WILLOW.



more than two centuries—the measure of Drayton’s “Ballad of Agincourt.” I do not see that a line or a word could be spared. There were two elements in this collection not previously seen in Mr. Longfellow’s poetry, one being the power of beautifying common things, the other, the often renewed experiment of hexameter verse. What I mean by beautifying common things is the making a village blacksmith a theme, and a legitimate theme, too, for poetry. Mr. Longfellow has certainly done this, I do not quite see how, and has drawn a lesson likewise, for which, however, I care nothing. More purely poetical than “The Village Blacksmith” are “Endymion” and “Maidenhood.” The sentiment of the last is very refined and spirited. “It is not always May,” “The Rainy Day,” and “God’s Acre,” each is perfect of its kind, and the kinds are very different. “The Rainy Day,” for instance, is in the manner of “The Beleaguered City,” which for once has produced a good poem—I suspect, because it is a short one. “To the River Charles” is a pleasant glimpse of Mr. Longfellow’s early Cambridge life, and the art of it is perfect.

The most popular poem in Mr. Longfellow’s second collection—“Excelsior”—has more moral than poetical value. The conception of a young man carrying a banner up a mountain suggests a set scene in a drama, and the end of this imaginary person does not affect us as it should, his attempt to excel being so foolhardy. That he would be frozen to death was a foregone conclusion. The most important of the translations here (all of which are excellent) was “The Children of the Lord’s Supper,” from the Swedish of Tegnér. It renewed, as I have said, the often baffled attempt to naturalize hexameters in English poetry—an attempt which Mr. Longfellow had made four years before, in his paper on “Frithiof’s Saga,” when he translated the description of Frithiof’s ancestral estate at Framnäs into this measure. The poets and poetasters of the Elizabethan era tried in vain to revive it. Gabriel Harvey, the friend of Spenser, projected a reform of English poetry—a reform which, if it had succeeded, would have caused “a general surceasing of rhyme” and a return to certain, or uncertain, rules of quantity. “Spenser suffered himself to be drawn into this

foolish scheme," says Professor Child, "and for a year worked away at hexameters and iambic trimeters quite seriously." (The year in question, I take it, was 1580.) Harvey's project was taken up with zeal by a coterie over which Sidney and Dyer presided; but the wits, notably Nash, ridiculed it, the latter saying (in substance) that the hexameter was a gentleman of an ancient house, but that the English language was too craggy for him to run his long plow in it. And Ascham wrote of it, about fifteen years before, that it rather trotted and hobbled than ran smoothly "in our English tong." So thought not Master Abraham Fraunce, who, in 1587, published a translation of the "Aminta" of Tasso, in hexameters, and in the following year a work entitled "Lawier's Logicke," wherein he stowed away a version of Virgil's Eclogue of Alexis, in the same measure. Less than a century from this date, Edward Phillips, the nephew of Milton, paid his respects and disrespects to the ancient and modern poets in his "Theatrum Poetarum" (1675)—a curious little book, which is thought to reflect the opinions of his illustrious uncle. He sums up the unlucky translator of Tasso in a few lines: "Abraham Fraunce, a versifier of Queen Elizabeth's time, who, imitating Latin measure in English verse, wrote his 'Ivy Church' and some other things in hexameter, some also in hexameter and pentameter; nor was he altogether singular in this way of writing, for Sir Philip Sidney, in the pastoral interludes of his 'Arcadia,' uses not only these, but all other sorts of Latin measure, in which, no wonder, he is followed by so few, since they neither become the English nor any other modern language." Winstanley expressed the same unfavorable opinion of Fraunce's hexameters twelve years later (1687), cribbing the very words of Phillips for that purpose.

Langbaine, in his "Account of the English Dramatick Poets" (1691), adds four separate works, not mentioned by Winstanley and Phillips to the list of Fraunce's productions (all in hexameters), and records the disuse of quantitative experiments in English versification. "Notwithstanding Mr. Chapman in his translation of Homer, and Sir Philip Sidney in his Eclogues, have practiced this way of writing, yet this way of imitating the Latin measures of verses, particularly the

hexameter, is now laid aside, and the verse of ten syllables, which we style heroic verse, is most in use." The next attempt to revive hexameters on any scale was made by that metrical experimentalist, Southey, in his "Vision of Judgment," in 1821—a piece of obsequious profanity which richly deserved the ridicule that Byron cast upon it. Such, so far as I know, is the history of this alien measure in English poetry. Mr. Longfellow thought well of it, as we have seen, and was justified in so thinking by the excellence of his own practice therein. "The Children of the Lord's Supper" is a charming poem, to which its antique setting is very becoming.

Mr. Longfellow made a third voyage to Europe after publishing his "Ballads and other Poems," and passed the summer on the Rhine. He returned after a few months, bringing with him a number of poems which were written at sea, and in which he expressed his detestation of slavery. "Poems on Slavery" were published in 1843, and dedicated to W. E. Channing, who did not live to read the poet's admiration of his character and his work. This dedication, which is spirited, contains a noble stanza:

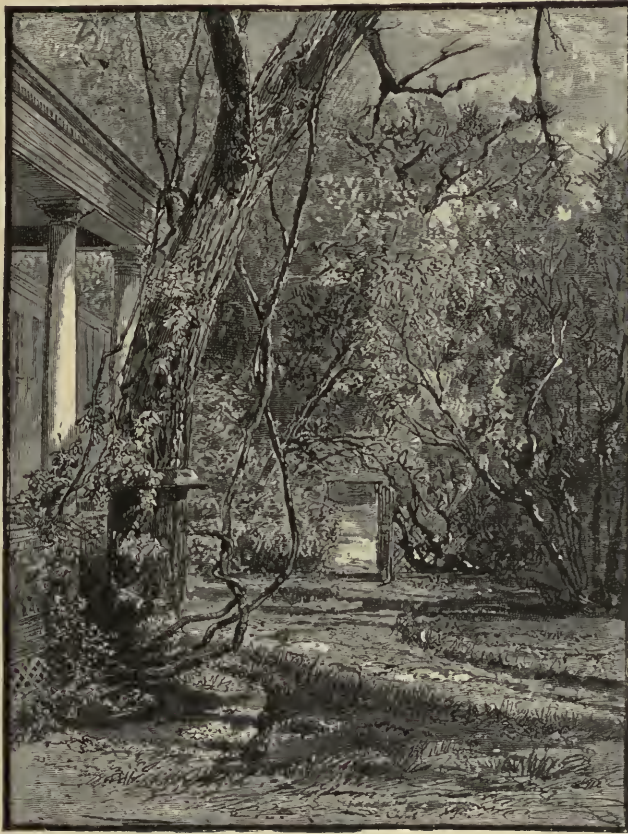
"Well done! Thy words are great and bold;  
At times they seem to me  
Like Luther's, in the days of old,  
Half battles for the free."

"The Slave's Dream" is one of the few rememberable poems of which the "peculiar institution" was the inspiration. It is exceedingly picturesque, and its versification is masterly. The harmony of sound and sense—the movement of the fourth stanza is very fine:

"And then at furious speed he rode  
Along the Niger's bank,  
His bridle-reins were golden chains,  
And, with a martial clank,  
At each leap he could feel his scabbard of steel  
Smiting his stallion's flank."



The fertility of Mr. Longfellow's mind and the variety of his powers were manifested in his thirty-sixth year, when he published the "Poems on Slavery," of which I have just spoken, and "The Spanish Student"—a dramatic poem, the actors in which were the antipodes of the dusky figures which preceded them. Judged by the laws of its construction, and by the intention of its creator, "The



VIEW FROM THE REAR PIAZZA. (THE OPEN GATE-WAY LEADS TO THE LAWN, A BROAD AND SPLENDID STRETCH RUNNING TOWARD THE NORTH.)

Spanish Student" is a beautiful production. It should be read for what it is—a poem, and without the slightest thought of the stage, which was not in the mind of the author when he wrote it. So read, it will be found radiant with poetry, not of a passionate or profound kind, which would be out of place; for the plot is in no sense a tragic

one, but of a kind that suggests the higher walks of serious poetic comedy. The characters of the different actors in this little closet play are sketched with sufficient distinctness, and the conversation, which is lively and bustling, is suited to the speakers and their station in life. The gypsy dancing girl, *Preciosa*, is a lovely creation of the poet's fancy.

In 1843 Mr. Longfellow was married for the second time, and became the possessor of the Craigie house. Three years later he published "*The Belfry of Bruges and other Poems.*" Traces of his early manner, as unsuccessfully manifested in "*The Beleaguered City*," appear in "*Carillon*," the prologue to the volume, and in "*The Arrow and the Song*," which is, perhaps, the most perfect of all his smaller pieces. "*The Belfry of Bruges*" is a picturesque description of that quaint old city, as seen from the belfry tower in the market-place one summer morning, and an imaginative remembrance of its past history, which passes like a pageant before the eyes of the poet. Everything is clearly conceived and in orderly succession, and in no poem that he had previously written had the hand of the artist been so firm. "*Nuremberg*," a companion-piece in the same measure, is distinguished by the same precision of touch and the same broad excellence. There is an indescribable charm, a grace allied to melancholy, in "*A Gleam of Sunshine*," which is one of the few poems that refuse to be forgotten. "*The Arsenal at Springfield*" is in a certain sense didactic, I suppose, but I do not quite see how it could be otherwise, and be a poem at all. A poet should be a poet first, but he should also be a man, and a man who concerns himself with the joys and sorrows of his fellow-creatures. There was a great lesson in the burnished arms at Springfield, and a lesser poet than Mr. Longfellow would not have guessed it.

" Were half the power that fills the world with terror,  
       Were half the wealth bestowed on camps and courts,  
 Given to redeem the human mind from error,  
       There were no need of arsenals and forts :



“The warrior’s name would be a name abhorred,  
And every nation that should lift again  
Its hand against a brother, on its forehead  
Should wear forevermore the curse of Cain !”

Nothing could be more unlike than “The Norman Baron,” a study of the mediæval age, and “Rain in Summer,” a fresh and off-hand description of a country shower. My feeling about the last is that it would have been better if it had been cast in a regular stanza instead of its present form, which strikes me as being a whimsical one, and that it is not improved by the introduction, at the close, of a higher element than that of simple description. The last three sections are



VIEW FROM THE PIAZZA. (LOOKING SOUTH.)

poetical and imaginative, but it seems to me they disturb the harmony and unity of the poem.

Not many English-writing poets, good fathers as most of them were, have addressed poems to their children. Ben Jonson wrote some lines about his first daughter, who died in infancy. Coleridge sang a serious cradle-song over his son Hartley, in “Frost at Midnight.” Shelley bewailed the early death of his son William; and Leigh Hunt, most tuneful of all, celebrated two of his children in two characteristic poems, the most natural of which he inscribed to his son John, “A Nursery Song for a Four-Year-Old Romp.” These, as I re-



member, are some of the best-known English poets, to whom childhood was a source of inspiration. Mr. Longfellow distanced all of them, and apparently without an effort, in the volume under consideration. His poem "To my Child" has no superior of its kind in the language. We have a glimpse of the poet's house for the first time in verse, and of the chamber in which he wrote so many of his poems, which had now become the child's nursery. Its chimney was adorned with painted tiles, among which he enumerates :

" The lady with the gay macaw,  
The dancing-girl, the grave bashaw  
    With bearded lip and chin ;  
And, leaning idly o'er his gate,  
Beneath the imperial fan of state  
    The Chinese mandarin."

The child shakes his coral rattle with its silver bells, and is content for the moment with its merry tune. The poet listens to other bells than these, and they tell him that the coral was growing thousands of years in the Indian seas, and that the bells once reposed as shapeless ore in darksome mines, beneath the base of Chimborazo or the overhanging pines of Potosi.

" And thus for thee, O little child,  
Through many a danger and escape,  
The tall ships passed the stormy cape ;  
For thee in foreign lands remote,  
Beneath a burning, tropic clime,  
The Indian peasant, chasing the wild goat,  
Himself as swift and wild,  
In falling, clutched the frail arbute,  
The fibers of whose shallow root,  
Uplifted from the soil, betrayed  
The silver veins beneath it laid  
The buried treasures of the miser Time."

He turns from the child to the memory of one who formerly dwelt within the walls of his historic mansion :

“ Up and down these echoing stairs  
Heavy with the weight of cares,  
Sounded his majestic tread :  
Yes, within this very room  
Sat he in those hours of gloom,  
Weary both in heart and head.”

These grave thoughts are succeeded by pictures of the child at play, now in the orchard and now in the garden-walks, where his little carriage-wheels efface whole villages of sand-roofed tents that rise above the secret homes of nomadic tribes of ants. But, tired already, he comes back to parley with repose, and, seated with his father on a rustic seat in an old apple-tree, they see the waters of the river, and a sailless vessel dropping down the stream :

“ And like it, to a sea as wide and deep,  
Thou driftest gently down the tides of sleep.”

The poet speculates gravely on the future of his child, and bids him remember that if his fate is an untoward one, even in the perilous hour,

“ When most afflicted and oppressed  
From labor there shall come forth rest.”

In this poem, and in “The Occultation of Orion,” Mr. Longfellow has reached a table-land of imagination not hitherto attained by his Muse. “The Bridge” is a revelation of his personality, and a phase of his genius which has never ceased to charm the majority of his readers. The train of thought which it suggests is not new, but what thought that embraces mankind is new? Enough that it is natural, and sympathetic, and tender. The lines to “The Driving Cloud” are an admirable specimen of hexameters, and a valuable addition to our scanty store of aboriginal poetry—the forerunner of an immortal contribution not yet transmuted into verse.

Under the head of “Songs” we have eight poems, two of which are modeled after a fashion that Mr. Longfellow had succeeded in

making his own. I refer to "Sea-weed" and "The Arrow and the Song," two charming fantasies in which the doctrine of poetic correspondence (if I may be allowed the phrase) works out a triumphant excuse for its being. "The Day is Done" belongs to a class of poems which depend for their success upon the human element they contain, or suggest, and to which they appeal. "The Old Clock on the Stairs" is an illustration of what I mean, and as good a one as can be found in the writings of any modern poet. The humanities (to adapt a phrase) were never long absent from Mr. Longfellow's thoughts. We feel their presence in "The Old Clock on the Stairs," in "The Bridge," and in the unrhymed stanzas "To an Old Danish Song-book":

" Once in Elsinore,  
At the court of old King Hamlet,  
Yorick and his boon companions  
Sang these ditties.

" Once Prince Frederick's guard  
Sang them in their smoky barracks:  
Suddenly the English cannon  
Joined the chorus!"

This volume introduced Mr. Longfellow in a species of composition in which we have not hitherto seen him—the sonnet, of which there are three specimens here, neither of the strictest Italian form, the best, perhaps, being the one on "Dante," of whom, by the way, we had three translations, all from the "Purgatorio," in the "Voices of the Night." One feature of his poetry, and not its strongest (*me judice*), was the first which his imitators seized upon and sought to transfer to their own rhymes. I allude to his habit of comparing one thing with another thing—an outward fact with an inward experience, or *vice versa*. An example or two will illustrate what I mean:

" Before him, like a blood-red flag  
The bright flamingoes flew."



“ And it passed, like a glorious roll of drums,  
Through the triumph of his dream.”

“ Through the closed blinds the golden sun  
Poured in a dusky beam,  
Like the celestial ladder seen  
By Jacob in his dream.”

“ And the night shall be filled with music,  
And the cares, that infest the day,  
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,  
And as silently steal away.”

It was the fancy of Mr. Longfellow, and not his imagination, which commended his poetry to our poetasters of both sexes, and what was excellent in him—and is excellent in itself, when restrained within due bounds—became absurd in them, it was carried to such excesses.

Mr. Longfellow's next volume was, in a certain sense, the gift of Hawthorne, to whom he was indebted for its theme. It is stated briefly in the first volume of his “American Note-books,” in a cluster of memoranda written between October 24, 1838, and January 4, 1839.

*Voilà*: “H. L. C—— heard from a French Canadian a story of a young couple in Acadie. On their marriage day, all the men of the province were summoned to assemble in the church to hear a proclamation. When assembled, they were all seized and shipped off to be distributed through New England, among them the new bridegroom. His bride set off in search of him, wandered about New England all her lifetime, and at last, when she was old, she found her bridegroom on his death-bed. The shock was so great that it killed her likewise.” This forcible deportation of a whole people occurred in 1755, when the French, to the extent of eighteen thousand souls, were seized by the English, in the manner stated. History, which excuses so much, has perhaps excused the act; but humanity never can. It is as indefensible as the Inquisition.

“Evangeline,” which was published in 1847, disputed the palm with “The Princess,” which was published in the same year. The

two volumes are so unlike that no comparison can, or should, be made between them. Each shows its writer at his best as a story-teller, and if the mediæval medley surpasses the modern pastoral in richness of coloring, it is surpassed, in turn, by the tender human interest of the latter. I should no more think of telling the story of *Evangeline* than I should think of telling the story of *Ruth*. It is what the critics had been so long clamoring for—an American poem—and it is narrated with commendable simplicity. Poetry, as poetry, is kept in the background; the descriptions, even when they appear exuberant, are subordinated to the main purpose of the poem, out of which they rise naturally; the characters are clearly drawn, and the landscapes through which they move are thoroughly characteristic of the New World. It is the French village of Grand-Pré which we behold; it is the colonial Louisiana and the remote West—not the fairy-land which Campbell imagined for himself when he wrote "*Gertrude of Wyoming*," with its shepherd swains tending their flocks on green declivities and skimming the lake with light canoes, while lovely maidens danced in brown forests to the music of timbrels! *Evangeline*, loving, patient, sorrowful wanderer, has taken a permanent place, I think, among the heroines of English song; but, whether the picturesque hexameters in which her pathetic story is told will hereafter rank among the standard measures of the language, can only be conjectured. That the poets have fancied them is certain, for the year after the publication of "*Evangeline*" saw Clough writing them in "*The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich*," and ten years later saw Kingsley writing them in his "*Andromeda*." Matthew Arnold maintains that the hexameter is the only proper measure in which to translate Homer; and already two versions of the *Iliad* in this measure have been made, one by Herschel (1866), and another by Cochrane (1867).

Two years before the publication of "*Evangeline*" (1845), Mr. Longfellow conferred a scholarly obligation upon the admirers of foreign poetry by editing "*The Poets of Europe*," a closely-printed octavo of nearly eight hundred pages, containing specimens of European poets in ten different languages, representing the labors of upward of



one hundred translators, including himself. Four years later (1849), he published a tale, entitled "Kavanagh." It has no plot to speak of, but its sketches of character are bright and amusing, and its glimpses of New England village life are pleasantly authentic. One of the personages of the book is more than a being of the mind. I refer to Mr. Hathaway, whom all our authors have met, and whose nonsense about a national literature they have listened to with as much patience as they were blessed with. He waits upon Mr. Churchill (the readers of "Kavanagh" will remember), and that gentle genius ventures to differ with him in language which, I am sure, expresses the opinion of his scholarly creator. "Nationality is a good thing to a certain



THE WESTERN ENTRANCE. (FROM THE PIAZZA THERE IS A VIEW OF THE RIVER CHARLES, BRIGHTON, AND THE DISTANT HILLS.)

extent; but universality is better. All that is best in the great poets of all countries is not what is national in them, but what is universal. Their roots are in their native soil; but their branches wave in the unpatriotic air that speaks the same language unto all men, and their leaves shine with the illimitable light that pervades all lands. Let us



throw all the windows open; let us admit the light and air on all sides, that we may look toward the four corners of the heavens, and not always in the same direction." The curious thing about this national literature is (Mr. Churchill might have added), that few nations really know when they possess it, their knowledge depending upon the prior discovery of alien nations. If the English had not so settled it, would we ever have found out for ourselves what great national poets we have in Mr. Walt Whitman and Mr. Joaquin Miller? Do our critical cousins know what an inspired singer they have in Poet Close?

What impress me in reading Mr. Longfellow's poetry are the extent of his poetic sympathies and the apparent ease with which he passes from one class of subjects to another. His instincts are sure in his choice of all his subjects, and his perception of their poetic capacities is keen. They translate themselves readily into his mind, and he clothes them in their singing-ropes when the spirit moves him. The five years which included the publication of the next three volumes of his poetical writings—"The Seaside and the Fireside" (1850), "The Golden Legend" (1851), and "The Song of Hiawatha" (1855)—added largely to his reputation as a man of varied attainments, to whom poetry was an art in which he was perpetually discovering new possibilities. There are twenty-three poems in "The Seaside and the Fireside" (including the dedication and the translations), no two of which are alike, though they all disclose the skillful hand by which they were wrought. The most important of them, as a work of art, is the best poem, of which Schiller's "Song of the Bell" was the model—"The Building of the Ship." I may be singular in my opinion, but my opinion is that it is a better poem than Schiller's, in which I have never been able to interest myself, possibly because all the English translations of it are so indifferent. Its theme is better adapted to poetic treatment than Schiller's, partly, no doubt, because it is more tangible to the imagination, and capable, therefore, of more definite presentation before the eye of the mind; but largely, I think, because its associations are not attached to so many memories

as cluster about the ringing of a bell. Its unity is in its self-concentration.

"The Golden Legend" transports us back to the Middle Ages, of which we have had transitory gleams in the earlier writings of Mr. Longfellow. The poetic atmosphere of that remote period envelops a lovely story, which turns, like that of "Evangeline," upon the love and devotion of woman, that in this instance is happily rewarded.

The figure of Elsie, the peasant girl, who determines to sacrifice her life to restore her prince to happiness, is worthy of an exalted place in any poet's dream of fair women. The charm of the poem, apart from its poetry, is the thorough and easy scholarship of the writer, who contrives to conceal the evidences of his reading—an art which few poets have possessed in an equal degree, and which Moore did not possess at all. If the opinion of an unlettered man is worth anything, the miracle-play of "The Nativity" is conceived in the very spirit of those archaic entertainments which cleric pens devised for the edification of the laity. It had no prototype, so far as I know, in modern English poetry, and has had no successor at all worthy of it, except Mr. Swinburne's "Masque of Queen Bersabe." Mr. Ruskin reflected, I think, the judgment of most scholarly readers of this poem when he wrote in his "Modern Painters" that its author had entered more closely into the temper of the monk, for good and for evil, than ever yet theological writer or historian, though they may have given their life's labor to the analysis.

Poets are distinguished from writers of verse not only by superiority of genius, but by superiority of knowledge. The versifier gropes about in search of poetical subjects, while the poet goes to them instinctively, and often finds them when others have sought for them in vain. That there was a poetic element in the North American Indian several American poets had believed, and, so believing, had striven to quicken their verse with its creative energies. Sands and Eastburn wrote together the ponderous poem of "Yamoyden"; Hoffman wrote a "Vigil of Faith"; Seba Smith a "Powhattan"; Street a "Frontenac"; and others, I dare say, other aboriginal poems, whose names I



have forgotten. They are unanimous in one thing—they all failed to interest their readers. The cause of this was not far to seek, we can see, since success has been achieved, but it demanded a vision which was not theirs, and which, it seemed, only one American poet had. He saw that the Indian himself, as he figures in our history, was not capable of being made a poetic hero, but he saw that there might be a poetic side to him, and that it existed in his legends, if he had any. That he had many, and that they were remarkable for a certain primitive imagination, was well known. They were brought to light by the late Henry R. Schoolcraft, who heard of their existence among the Odjibwa Nation, inhabiting the region about Lake Superior in 1822.

Specimens of these aboriginal fictions were published by Mr. Schoolcraft in his "Travels in the Central Portions of the Mississippi Valley" (1825), and his "Narrative of the Expedition to Itasca Lake" (1834), but they were not given to the world in their entirety until 1839 in his "Algie Researches." They were as good as manuscript for the next sixteen years, though one American poet had mastered them thoroughly. This was Mr. Longfellow, who, in 1855, turned this Indian Edda, as he happily called it, into "The Song of Hiawatha." The great and immediate success of this poem and the increase of reputation which it brought its author recalled the early years of the present century, when Scott and Byron were sure of thousands of readers whenever it pleased them to write a metrical romance. It was eagerly read by all classes, who suddenly found themselves interested in the era of flint arrow-heads, earthen pots, and skin clothes, and in its elemental inhabitants, who, dead centuries ago, if they ever existed, were now living the everlasting life of poetry. Everybody read "The Song of Hiawatha," which passed through many editions, here and in England, and elsewhere in the Old World in other languages. Its intellectual value was universally admitted, but its form was questioned, as all new forms are sure to be. For the form was new to most readers, though not to scholars in the literatures of Northern Europe. It is original with Mr. Longfellow, his friends declared. No, his enemies answered, he has borrowed it from the Finnish epic, "The Kalewala."



The quarrel, which was acrimonious, interested the critics, who are often entertained by trifles, but nobody else cared a button about it. The temporary novelty of its form led to innumerable parodies, but to nothing serious, that I remember; which I take to be a silent verdict against its permanency in English versification.

Mr. Longfellow added, three years later, to the laurels he had won by "*Evangeline*," by a second narrative poem in hexameters—"The Courtship of Miles Standish." It lacks the pathetic interest which is the charm of the earlier poem, but it possesses the same merit of picturesqueness, and a firmer power of delineating character. Priscilla is a very vital little Puritan maiden, who sees no impropriety in asking the man she loves why he does not speak for himself, and not for Miles Standish, who might find time to attend to his own wooing. The Puritan atmosphere here is as perfect of its kind as the Catholic atmosphere of "*Evangeline*," and is thoroughly in keeping with the grim old days in which the story is laid. The versification of the poem is more vigorous than that of the sister poem, the hexameters having a sort of martial movement about them.

I do not see that the poetry of Mr. Longfellow has changed much in the last twenty years, except that it has become graver in its tone and more serious in its purpose. Its technical excellence has steadily increased. He has more than held his own against all English-writing poets, and in no walk of poetry so positively as that of telling a story. In an age of story-tellers he stands at their head, not only in the narrative poems I have mentioned, but in the lesser stories included in his "*Tales of a Wayside Inn*," for which he has laid all the literatures of the world under contribution. He preceded by several years the voluminous poet of "*The Earthly Paradise*," who has no fitting sense of the value of time, and no suspicion that there may be too much of a good thing. I would rather praise his long narratives in verse than read them, which is but another way of saying that I prefer short poems to long ones. About the only piece of criticism of Poe's to which I can assent without qualification is, that long poems are mistakes. A poem proper should produce a unity of impression which

can only be obtained within a reasonable time ; it should never weary its readers into closing the book. This is very destructive criticism, but I am inclined to think there is something in it, though it is not respectful to the memory of Milton. Mr. Longfellow's stories can all be read at a single sitting, which insures the unity of impression which they ought to create and which they do create beyond any modern



VIEW ACROSS THE LAWN, NORTH-WEST OF THE HOUSE.

poems with which I am acquainted. Mr. Longfellow had always shown great taste in the selection of his subjects, and it was a foregone conclusion that he would delight his admirers in his "Tales of a Wayside Inn." Every tale in that collection was worth a new version, even "The Falcon of Sir Federigo," which the young Barry Cornwall sang when Mr. Longfellow was a school-boy.

Mr. Longfellow's method of telling a story will compare favorably, I think, with any of the recognized masters of English narrative verse, from the days of Chaucer down. His heroics are as easy as those of Hunt and Keats, whose mannerisms and affectations he has avoided. They remind me of the heroics of no other English or American poet, and, unlike some of Mr. Longfellow's early poems, are without any



manner of their own. They as certainly attain a pure poetic style as the prose of Hawthorne attains a pure prose style.

The most distinctive of Mr. Longfellow's poems are probably those which he entitles "Birds of Passage," and which he has from time to time published as portions of separate volumes. They were inspired by many literatures, and are in many measures, among which, however, that of "The Song of Hiawatha" does not reappear, though the hexameter does, and as recently as in his last collection ("Keramos, and other Poems"), published in the present year. What first impresses me, in reading them, is the multifarious reading of their writer, who seems to have no favorite authors, but to read for the delight that he takes in letters. He has the art of finding unwritten poems in the most out-of-the-way books, and in every-day occurrences. A great man dies—the Duke of Wellington, for example—and he hymns his departure in "The Warden of the Cinque Ports," which many prefer to the Laureate's scholarly ode. His good friend Hawthorne dies, and he embalms his memory and his unfinished romance in imperishable verse :

" Ah ! who shall lift that wand of magic power,  
And the lost clew regain ?  
The unfinished window in Aladdin's tower  
Unfinished must remain !"

Sumner dies, and he drops a melodious tear upon his grave :

" Were a star quenched on high,  
For ages would its light,  
Still traveling downward from the sky,  
Shine on our mortal sight.

" So, when a great man dies,  
For years beyond our ken,  
The light he leaves behind him lies  
Upon the paths of men."

And again he bids him farewell in a touching sonnet, with a pathetic and unexpected ending :



“ Good-night ! good-night ! as we so oft have said  
 Beneath this roof at midnight, in the days  
 That are no more, and shall no more return.  
 Thou hast but taken thy lamp and gone to bed ;  
 I stay a little longer, as one stays  
 To cover up the embers that still burn.”

A child is born to him, and his friend Lowell's wife dies on the same night, and he commemorates both in “The Two Angels,” which has always seemed to me one of his perfect poems.

Mr. Longfellow published few translations while he was writing his more important works, such as the “Tales of a Wayside Inn,” and “The Story of Hiawatha.” That he had not forgotten his cunning, however, was evident in his “Three Books of Song” (1872), where he printed several translations of Eastern Songs, and in “Keramos, and other Poems,” which contains two hexameter translations from Virgil and Ovid, and twelve translations from French, German, and Italian poets. The volume last mentioned is remarkable in many ways. It not only shows no diminution of mental vigor, which one might naturally expect in a poet whose years have exceeded the allotted age of man, but it recalls the young poet who wrote “The Skeleton in Armor,” and the “Slave's Dream.” I know not where to look for more fire than I find in “The Leap of Roushan Beg,” nor more delicious picturesqueness than in “Castles in Spain.” “Keramos” belongs to the same class of poems as “The Building of the Ship,” and is as perfect a piece of poetic art as that exquisite poem. That the making of pottery could be so effectively handled in verse reminds me of what Stella said of Swift, viz., that he could write beautifully about a broomstick.

Mr. Longfellow's friendliness, not to say generosity, to his brother authors, is not the least among his poetic virtues. He sends a greeting to Lowell in “The Herons of Elmwood,” and honors the memory of Irving in a tender sonnet, “In the Churchyard at Tarrytown.” In “The Three Silences of Molinos” (which are those of Speech, Desire,

and Thought) he recognizes the excellence of the poet whom New England delights to honor next to himself:

“ O thou, whose daily life anticipates  
The world to come, and in whose thought and word  
The spiritual world preponderates,  
Hermit of Amesbury ! thou too hast heard  
Voices and melodies from beyond the gates,  
And speakest only when thy soul is stirred.”

If there was any doubt before that Mr. Longfellow was the first of living sonneteers, it is settled by “A Book of Sonnets” in this collection, the workmanship of which is simply perfect.

I have not left myself room in which to speak of Mr. Longfellow’s translation of the “Divina Commedia,” which is highly thought of by scholarly readers. I state, however, as a fact, that he was not engaged upon it over twenty-five years, as we are told in the “Life and Letters of George Ticknor”; nor more than thirty years, as we are told in Richardson’s “Primer of American Literature.” It was executed in less than two years.

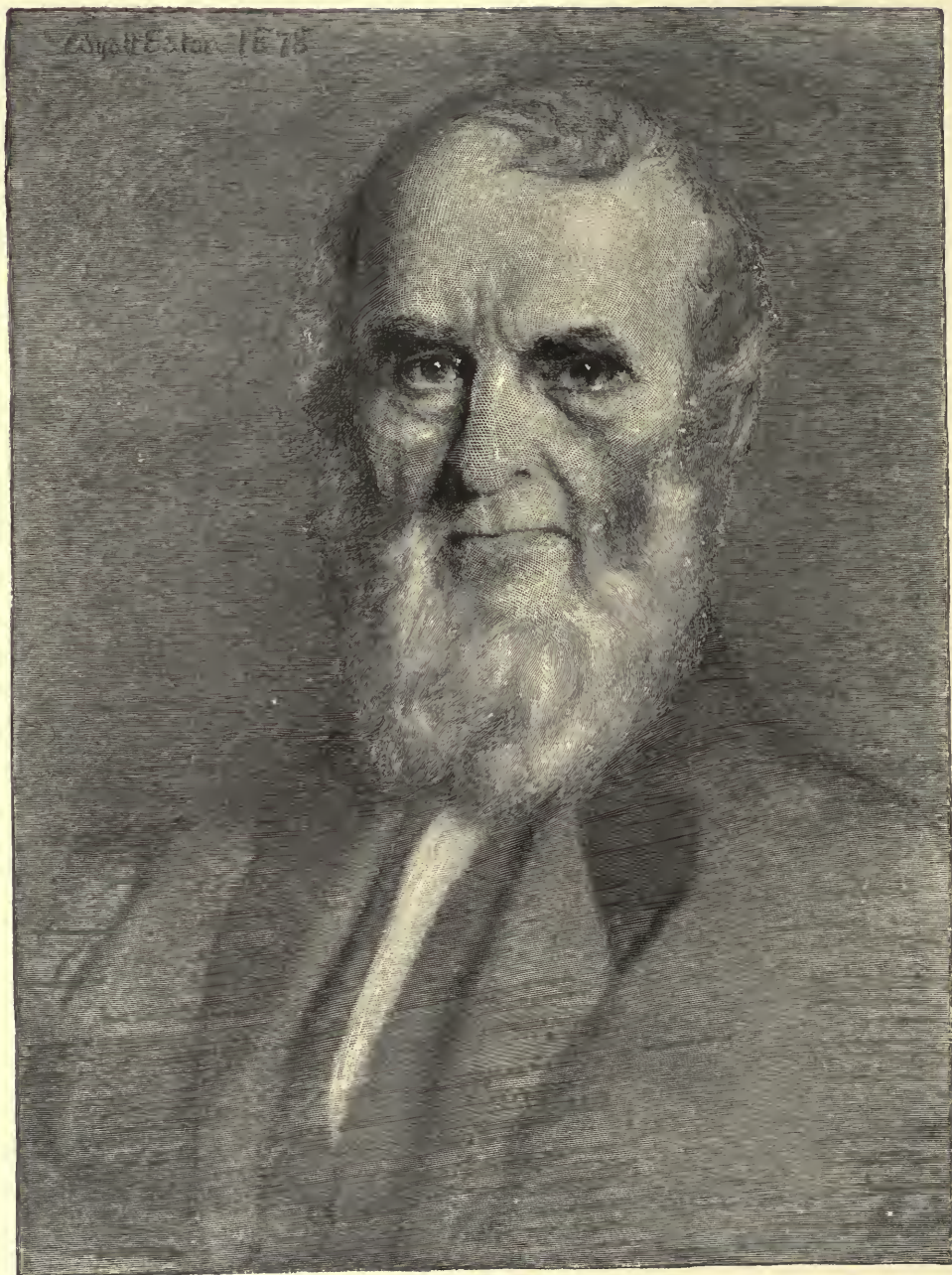
It has not been given to many poets to carry out the ideal of a poetic life as he has done, and to win a great reputation at an early age—a reputation which has not lessened or suffered from any fluctuation of public taste. The singer of “Keramos” addresses a different public from the one that welcomed “The Voices of the Night,” but he holds it nevertheless. In looking back upon his long literary career, I can see that he has been true to himself as he was manifested to us in his early prose and verse; that he has fulfilled his scholarly intentions; and that he has created and satisfied a taste for a literature which did not exist in this country until he began to write—a literature drawn from the different languages of Europe, now in the shape of direct translation, and now in the shape of suggestions, alien to the mass of English and American readers, but gladly received by both as new intellectual possessions. He has broadened our culture in completing his own, and has enlarged our sympathies until they

embrace other people's than ours—the sturdy Norseman, the simple Swede, the patient Acadien, and the marvel-believing red man of pre-historic times.

Cardinal Wiseman delivered a lecture some years ago on the “Home Education of the Poor.” In the course of this lecture he commented upon the fact that England has no poet who is to its laboring classes what Goethe is to the peasant of Germany, and said: “There is one writer who approaches nearer than any other to this standard, and he has already gained such a hold on our hearts that it is almost unnecessary for me to mention his name. Our hemisphere can not claim the honor of having brought him forth, but he still belongs to us, for his works have become as household words wherever the English language is spoken. And whether we are charmed by his imagery, or soothed by his melodious versification, or elevated by the high moral teachings of his pure muse, or follow with sympathetic hearts the wanderings of *Evangeline*, I am sure that all who hear my voice will join with me in the tribute I desire to pay to the genius of Longfellow.”













Not by the page word-painted  
Let life be banded or sainted,  
Deeper than written scroll  
The colors of the soul.

Sweeter than any song  
My songs that found no tongue,  
Nobler than any fact  
My wish that failed of act.

John G. Whittier

Sixth Mo. 11. 1879.







WHITTIER'S BIRTHPLACE, NEAR HAVERHILL, MASS.

## JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER is in some respects the most American of all the American poets. To say that there are no traces of other literatures than our own in his writings is to say too much; but it is safe to say that he has been less influenced by other literatures than any of our poets, with the exception, perhaps, of Bryant. When he is least original, as in his early Indian poems, we still feel that he is more than imitative; he reflects the books that he has read, but the impression which they leave on his mind is no more permanent than the shadow of a cloud on a mountain lake. Of his genius there never was any doubt; what was doubtful was the direction which it would take, and which would lead him to the kingdom of which he

was to be the lord and master. It was not long before he discovered that he possessed a personality of his own; but it was only after many days, and much intellectual groping, that he discovered whither it was leading him. I have, I believe, a tolerably clear idea of the place that he occupies in American literature, and, if the reader will follow me carefully, I hope to point out the steps by which he reached it. It was no royal road which he pursued, but a succession of tangled paths and by-ways in which he was often bewildered, but through which he went on manfully—

“ Beating his wings toward the golden bough.”

The life of Mr. Whittier has not been a remarkable one, though it has not been devoid of incidents and stormy mental struggles. If he had been born in the goodly State of Pennsylvania instead of Massachusetts, the burden of ancestral tradition would probably have rested more lightly on his shoulders. A Friend of Friends, he inherited centuries of Puritan aversion and persecution.

We are indebted to the Puritan Fathers for many things, but religious toleration is not among the number. One would have thought this the one virtue above all others which would have warmed their rugged natures; but it is the curse of persecution that it makes its sufferers persecutors in turn, the exceptions to this gloomy rule being few and far between. They have generally been found among the pietistic, non-resistant sects, notably among the followers of Fox and Penn, who have generally been reprobated by the church militant, which has now confronted them with the standing army of Episcopacy, and now harassed them with the free lances of Dissent. If liberty of conscience came over in the Mayflower, it was a portion of her perishable cargo, and was soon disposed of, and never afterward imported, or, if imported, was confiscated before landing. Nowhere were moral revenue laws more strictly enforced than in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and against none with more rigor than against the Quakers. The drab coats and broad-brimmed hats were as hateful to the colonists as the feathers and the war-paint of the Indians. They



were not to be exterminated, however, for there was an invincible strength in the doctrines of peace which they professed and practiced, and in the simple goodness of their lives. Shunned at first, it was not long before they were tolerated, and before their influence was felt in the milder manners of their Puritan neighbors, who gradually forgot the senseless animosities of their ancestors. Such I conceive to be the early colonial history of the Quakers, who succeeded in establishing themselves in Massachusetts and elsewhere; one family, in particular, on the banks of the Merrimac. This family was of no more consequence, in the eyes of its contemporaries, than the family of Shakespeare, a couple of centuries before, or the family of Burns, a century later; but it is of importance now, because it has produced that bright, consummate flower of the race—a poet.



THE OLD SCHOOL-HOUSE, HAVERHILL, MASS.

We have not hitherto manifested much curiosity in regard to the genealogy of American men of letters; but, if Dalton's theory of heredity obtains a foothold among us, it is likely to be applied to them by our children. We have been told since Bryant's death that his mother was a descendant of John Alden, and I have somewhere read that Mr. Longfellow is an offshoot of the same vigorous stock. Of the ancestors of Mr. Whittier I know nothing, except that they were Friends, as I have intimated, and that they settled on the banks of the Merrimac. That they were men of probity and principle goes



without saying, for it was the characteristic of the peculiar people to which they belonged, and which frequently made them a standing rebuke to those about them. He was born at Haverhill, Massachusetts, on the 17th of December, 1807. He resided at the homestead of his family until his twentieth year, getting as much education as was then thought necessary—a simple course of study in which the three R's were prominent, and the "higher branches," as they are now called, were conspicuous by their absence—and making himself useful on the farm. As might be expected in a secluded rural district of New England sixty years ago, he had little aid from books. There were then no public libraries, no lyceums, reading clubs, nor debating societies. His father's library, as he tells us in "Snow-Bound," consisted of only about a score of volumes, mostly relating to the doctrines of his sect and the lives of its founders. There was a single novel of a very harmless character, which was carefully hidden from the younger members of the family, and

"Of poetry, or good or bad,  
A single book was all we had,  
Where Ellwood's meek, drab-skirted muse,  
A stranger to the heathen Nine,  
Sang, in a somewhat nasal whine,  
The wars of David and the Jews."

One year of academy life was all the education he received, apart from that obtained at the district school, which was open only about twelve weeks in midwinter. Mr. Whittier's poem, "In School Days," gives a good description of the school-house.

In 1840 he went to Amesbury, on the banks of the picturesque Powow, which joins the Merrimac at Haverhill. Mr. Whittier has made his readers familiar with this Indian-named river in his poems, for from his study window he could

. . . "see the winding Powow fold  
The green hill in its belt of gold."

The poet is fond of the rivers and streams of his boyhood. In "Snow-bound" he sings of the brook that flowed by his birthplace at Haverhill:

"The music of whose liquid lip  
Had been to us companionship;  
And, in our lonely life, had grown  
To have an almost human tone."

In 1876 Mr. Whittier changed his home again, this time to Danvers, Massachusetts, where he still lives in an old-fashioned house called Oak Knoll, from whose broad piazzas Mr. Homer Martin has made several beautiful pictures. The house at Amesbury, some four hours' ride by train from Danvers, is owned by Mr. Whittier and kept ready for occupancy whenever he may choose to visit it, but Oak Knoll is his favorite home.

It was not as a writer of verse that Mr. Whittier became known, outside of his limited circle of readers in the "Haverhill Gazette," but as a writer of prose in the columns of the "American Manufacturer," a journal in which tariffs and other questions of political economy were discussed, and of which he was the editor. He must have had some reputation as a thinker to have been intrusted with a paper of this character at the age of twenty-one—a paper which was likely to raise controversies in which no rustic pen could engage successfully, least of all a poetic one. It was published in the Athens of New England—Boston; and it must have increased his reputation, or he would not have been selected as the editor of the "New England Weekly Review," which was published in Hartford. It was a paper of some note at the time (1830), which had been edited by that clever journalist, George D. Prentice (who fancied all his life that he was a poet), and, later, if I am not mistaken, by J. G. C. Brainard, whose early death was a loss to American literature. Mr. Whittier's first publications were a little volume of prose and verse (selected, I presume, from his contributions to the "Review"), entitled "Legends of New England" (1831), and "Moll Pitcher," the date of which is not given. I have not seen the latter, which is said to have been a poeti-

cal tale, of which Mistress Mary Pitcher, the famous old witch of Nahant, was the heroine. Neither of these productions is of any importance, I imagine, though they are interesting as being the earliest of Mr. Whittier's recorded works, and as showing the bent of his mind at that period, and the class of subjects with which it sympathized. The first attempts of men of genius are always indicative of their powers, suggesting, as they do, possibilities which, in time, and under the influence of favorable stars, ripen into potent actualities. The child is father of the man, in literature as in other and less glori-



THE WHITTIER HOUSE, AMESBURY, MASS.

ous careers, though we can not always forecast the horoscope of the man from his nativity; for he may die young, like Chatterton, or live, like Dermody, and Maginn, and Mangan, and Poe.

It was the era of unsuccessful journals, daily, weekly, and otherwise; so I take it for granted that the "New England Weekly Review" lingered, and died a natural death. Mr. Whittier, at any rate, severed his connection with it, and engaged in other undertakings, and during the next five years he was alternately a biographer, a politician, a farmer, and a legislator. He published in 1832 a *Memoir of Brain-*



ard, which was prefixed to the second edition of his "Literary Remains," and in 1833 an essay entitled "Justice and Expediency, or Slavery considered with a View to its Abolition." There was something about the young Quaker that commended him to the respect of his fellow-townsmen, who elected him their representative in the State Legislature. He had made his mark, in a certain sense, and had ventured in two intellectual paths in which he was hereafter to walk—the neglected, shadowy by-way of early legendary lore, and the dangerous road of political controversy, in which few were courageous enough to be seen. He was a bold man forty years ago who dared avow himself an abolitionist. Love of justice in the abstract, pursuit of politics in the concrete, and journalism in its various departments, are all excellent things; but, with due respect to the men of letters who have distinguished themselves therein, they are not literature. Mr. Whittier had made his mark, as I have said, but, strictly speaking, he was not yet an author. The work that he had hitherto performed was experimental and tentative; what would he do next? what was wanted? what could he do best? That he put these questions to himself is extremely probable, and that they were soon answered, in a measure, is certain.

American literature was in the formative stage of its existence half a century ago. No one could say exactly what it was, or what it was likely to be. That it should differ from English literature was admitted by all, but wherein should it differ? What element of thought was peculiar to the New World? What did it possess, either in the present or the past, out of which a characteristic and distinctive literature could be builded? American poetry, which chiefly concerns us now, had busied itself at intervals with the aboriginal inhabitants of the Continent. Freneau was among our earliest writers of verse who felt that there was, or might be, poetic possibilities in the Indian, and that he did not develop them into a poem of any length was doubtless owing to the fact that he was rather a political singer than a poet. He was read by Campbell, who was not above stealing from him, and who also detected the poetic side of the Indian nature. "Gertrude of

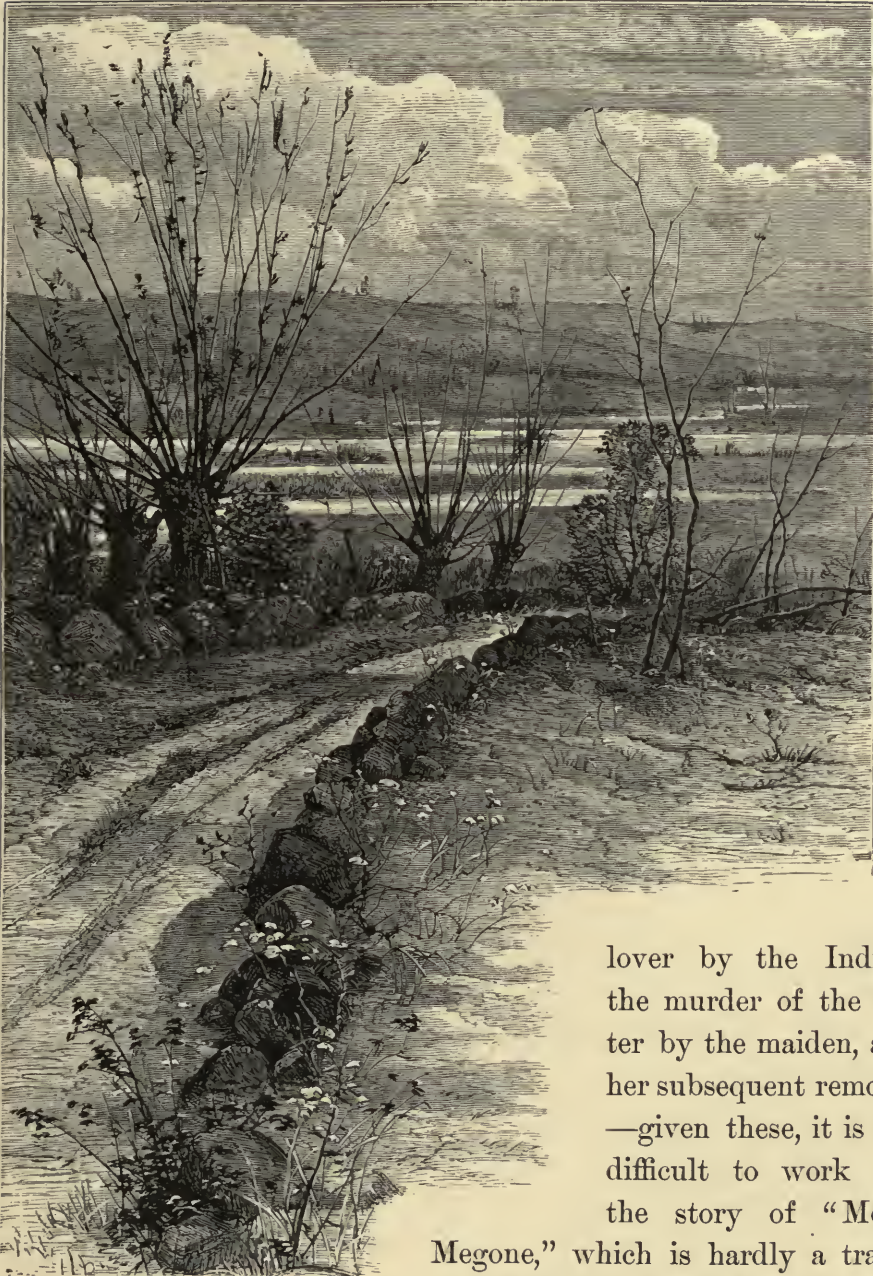
Wyoming" is a pathetic poem, though it is absurd in its want of local coloring, and the Oneida chief who figures in it,

"The stoic of the woods, the man without a tear,"

is, indeed, a vigorous and life-like sketch, which ranks among the happiest creations of Campbell's genius. This poem was at once reprinted here, and was immediately popular, being, as it was, a revelation of the poetic value of certain episodes in our colonial history. The next Indian poem of any account was the "Yamoyden" of Sands and Eastman, which attracted a fair share of attention, and received more praise than it was entitled to from patriotic critics. Bryant, then, as now, the first of our poets, was the first to perceive the proper poetic place of the red man, and his relation to the white race by whom he had been conquered. The few Indian poems which he had written were exquisite, but they were too quiet, I suspect, to strike their readers, who looked for narratives instead of suggestions and reflections, and who wanted to be interested in historical incidents. They were ready to welcome any one who satisfied, or seemed to satisfy, their uncritical demands, and our poets and versifiers were anxious to accommodate them. The recognition of this expectancy, rather than a natural inclination to gratify it, beguiled Mr. Whittier into the writing of his third volume, "Mogg Megone," which was published in his twenty-eighth year, 1835.

It is founded on fact, as the saying is—at any rate as regards the existence of its hero, Mogg Megone, who was a leader among the Saco Indians in the bloody war of 1677 (I am following Mr. Whittier's notes), who attacked and captured the garrison at Black Point, October 12th of that year, and cut off, at the same time, a party of Englishmen near Saco River. Besides Mogg Megone, who is the average Indian chief of colonial records—brave, suspicious, revengeful, and drunken—we have John Bonython, a white outlaw, his daughter Ruth, whose lover Mogg Megone has slain and scalped, and a Jesuit priest, of whom Père Ralle, one of the most indefatigable French missionaries, was the original. These four shadows, the murder of Ruth's





THE MERRIMACK AND POWOW.

lover by the Indian,  
the murder of the latter  
by the maiden, and  
her subsequent remorse  
—given these, it is not  
difficult to work out  
the story of “Mogg

Megone,” which is hardly a tragic  
one, though it is based upon deeds

of violence, and is certainly not a poetical one, in spite of the metrical  
form in which it is cast. It is easily though carelessly written, and  
is noticeable for the affluence of its descriptions.



The material and spiritual life of Mr. Whittier, at this time and later, is not so clear to me as I wish it were, and as it would have been if he had arranged his poems in the order in which they were written, and not under arbitrary headings and classifications. "Mogg Megone" was followed by "Lays of Home," in 1843; by "The Stranger in Lowell," in 1845; and "Supernaturalism in New England," in 1847, the two last in prose. While these works were in progress Mr. Whittier changed his residence, and enrolled himself as an active worker among the abolitionists, in 1838-'39. He edited the "Pennsylvania Freeman," an anti-slavery journal published in Philadelphia, and so little to the satisfaction of those who were opposed to its teachings that his office was sacked and burned by a mob. He afterward acted as one of the secretaries of the Anti-Slavery Society, and edited the "Anti-Slavery Reporter." His last editorial connections were with the "Lowell Standard" and the "National Era." To consider Mr. Whittier at this period simply as a poet would be as unjust as to consider him simply as a moralist, the fact being that he was both a poet and a moralist, the former by virtue of his genius, the latter by virtue of his Quaker ancestry, his social surroundings and proclivities, and the condition of his country.

His anti-slavery poems, which were collected by him under the title of "Voices of Freedom," cover a period of fifteen years, the earliest bearing the date of 1833, and the latest that of 1848. The majority of them (there are thirty-eight in all) come under the head of occasional poems. They are earnestly written, but, as the events which suggested them were of a temporary character, one has to stimulate an interest to read them now, and this not so much because the vexed question which so fiercely agitated the poet is happily an obsolete one as because in grappling with it he forgot to be a poet. There is no unconquerable antagonism between poetry and morality, but the perfect fusion of these intellectual qualities demands a kind of genius which Mr. Whittier did not at this time possess. Whether it be of a higher or lower order need not be discussed; that it is of a different order sufficiently explains the poetical deficiencies of his early

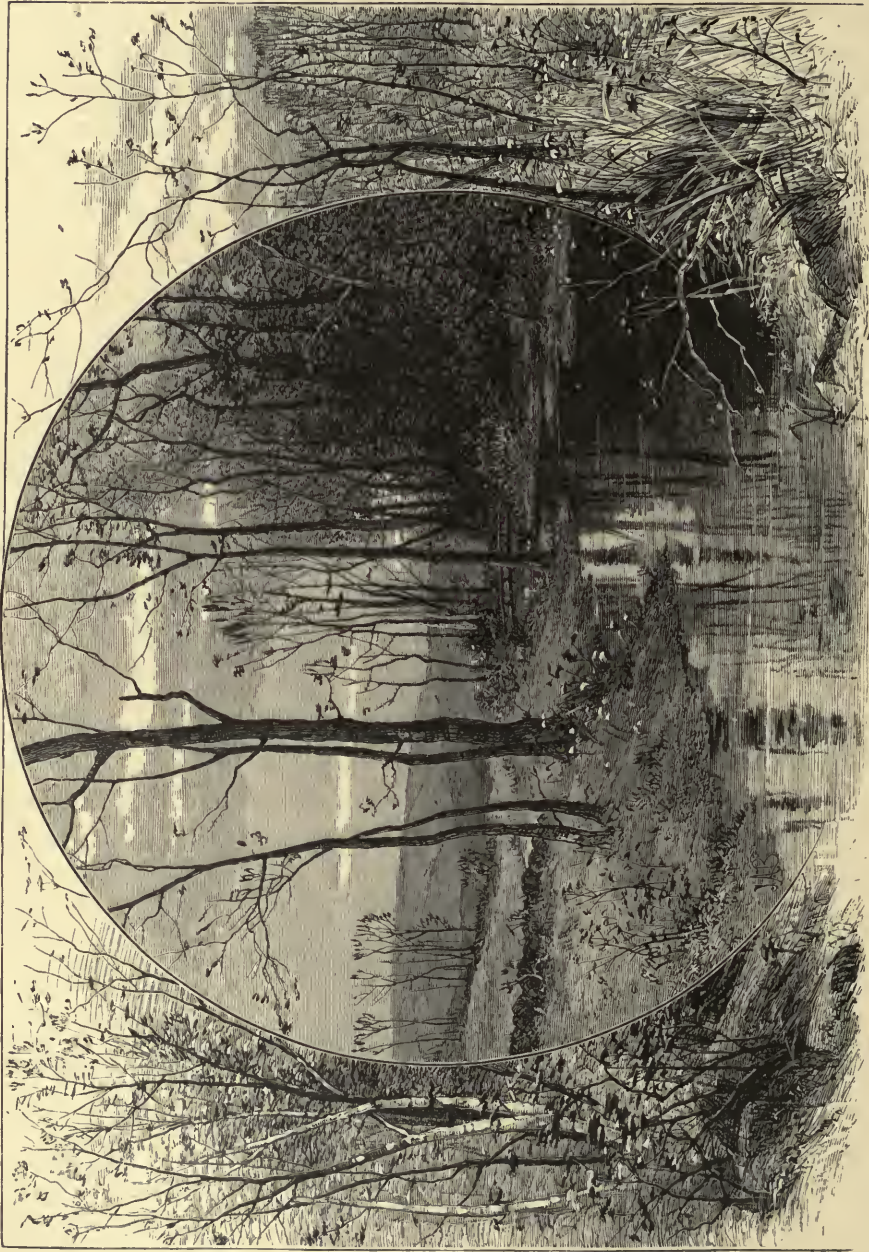
anti-slavery poems. He was carried away by his indignation, which was righteous enough, but, unfortunately, it was not inspiration. I should except, perhaps, from this critical condemnation the "Farewell of a Virginia Slave Mother to her Daughters sold into Southern Bondage," and "Massachusetts to Virginia." A stanza of the former will show its quality, and recall the poem itself to the memory of our older readers:

"Gone, gone—sold and gone,  
To the rice-swamp, dank and lone.  
Where the slave-whip ceaseless swings,  
Where the noisome insect stings,  
Where the fever demon strews  
Poison with the falling dews,  
Where the sickly sunbeams glare  
Through the hot and misty air—  
Gone, gone—sold and gone,  
To the rice-swamp dank and lone,  
From Virginia's hills and waters—  
Woe is me, my stolen daughters!"

If I were writing as a moralist I should, of course, take a moral view of Mr. Whittier's anti-slavery poems, and should, no doubt, find much to praise in them. Animated by the spirit of freedom, they are vehement, but not intemperate, in expression, and there is no gain-saying the justice of the cause they maintain. That they accomplished much or little toward the abolition of slavery is no reason why they should not have been written, nor why they should be passed over in silence. Holding the opinions that he did, and having the temperament that he had, Mr. Whittier could no more have stifled his fiery denunciations of slavery than the old Hebrew seers could have stifled their dark and fateful prophecies. We all have convictions, and honest men follow them, no matter whither they lead. We can afford to let health and wealth and fame miss us, but we can not afford to neglect our duties. Least of all can the poets, for they, above all other men, are dedicated to the worship of the implacable goddess,

"Stern daughter of the voice of God."





WHITTIER'S BROOK.

Granting this, as I must, I can not bring myself to admire Mr. Whittier's anti-slavery poetry. I do not so much wish it unwritten as that the time spent in writing it had been spent in more delightful tasks.



I speak for myself, of course, as a critic and a lover of poetical poetry.

If the moralist was strong in Mr. Whittier during the fifteen years that he allowed himself to support the anti-slavery cause by his verse, he by no means slumbered as a poet. His poems written during that period, published under the name of "Lays of Home," more than confirmed the favorable impression that had been created by "Mogg Megone." If the original editions of his writings were before me, I could speak of these poems with more certainty than at present, when I have to content myself with his "Complete Poetical Works" (1876), in which I know not where to look for them, though I presume they are to be found under the headings of "Legendary" and "Miscellaneous." What first strikes one in reading them is the positive and admirable growth of their author, who has now thoroughly mastered the *technique* of the poetic art.

The motive of these poems, and of "Pautucket," is partly natural description and partly historical recollection. The Indian element, which crops out in the last, underlies "The Funeral Tree of the Sokokis" and "The Fountain," which are imaginatively suggestive. Belonging to the period are four ballads, if I may call them such, which stand out among Mr. Whittier's early productions as specimens of his objective art. I refer to the pathetic story of "Cassandra Southwick," the tragic episode of "St. John," the adventure of Goodman Macy and the fugitive Quaker celebrated in "The Exiles," and the strange spiritual study of "The New Wife and the Old." We feel, in reading these poems, that we are in contact with creations; we have escaped abstractions, and have embraced human beings. We feel the individuality of Cassandra Southwick, who is a veritable woman, noble in her tribulations, and glorious in her triumph, which is simply that of womanhood. It is she who relates her story and not her poet, who has no more to do with it than the chorus of a Greek tragedy with the actors of the tragedy itself; he is an onlooker and infrequent expositor, but not an actor. "The New Wife and the Old" is a remarkable poem, which has for its theme the profoundest of mortal

relations, and which clutches at the relations and sympathies of the worlds of life and death.

The poems which Mr. Whittier has arranged under the head of "Miscellaneous" in the collected edition of his Poetical Works exhibit all, or nearly all, the qualities by which his ripest poetry is distinguished. "The Knight of St. John" is at once a ballad and a study of spiritual experience, such as Tennyson presents in "St. Agnes" and "Sir Galahad." It is followed by a group of seven poems, the inspiration of which is drawn from Hebraic writings and associations. Two of them, "Ezekiel" and "The Wife of Manoah to her Husband," are valuable and permanent additions to English sacred poetry.

The transition from poems like these to "My Soul and I" was a natural one, and, to a genius like Mr. Whittier's, inevitable. Mr. N. P. Willis, when a young man, attempted scriptural poems, and had been greatly overpraised for his attempts, which missed all that was characteristic in the Biblical writings, for which he substituted a kind of poetic elegance that could well have been spared. He sauntered about the sacred places in a domino, which was mistaken for the prophetic mantle. This fell upon the shoulders of another, who inherited a serious nature, and was not afraid to question himself in regard to his relations to his Maker.

I am not theologian enough to have an opinion other than a poetical one concerning "My Soul and I," but, poetically speaking, it seems to me a noteworthy production—a solemn canticle in which the religious nature of the writer struggles to express itself, and does so, though neither so clearly nor so forcibly as in similar poems of a later date. I know of nothing in American poetry which it resembles, and which could have suggested it. (The question of originality—let me say, once for all—never occurs to me in reading the poetry of Mr. Whittier, who never reminds me of any other poet, living or dead, being at all times and on all subjects his own simple, natural, manly self.)

The affectionate simplicity of Mr. Whittier's nature is seen in the poems which he addressed to his personal friends, and to those whose

life pursuits ran in the same channels as his own moral sympathies. Among his miscellaneous poems of this period are one addressed to Follen ("On Reading his Essay on the Future State"), and another to the poet Pierpont, whose "Airs of Palestine" delighted his childhood, and whose song, he says,

"Hath a rude martial tone, a blow in every thought."

The largeness of his genius was manifested in "Randolph of Roanoke," a magnificent tribute to the memory of that great man, and all the more so in that it was wrung from the lips of an opponent. As a piece of character-painting I know not where to look for its equal, and the marvel is that the portrait of this great slave-holder should have been drawn so justly by such a partisan as Whittier. Great men recognize each other, however, and never more readily than when the differences between them are radical and conscientious. The Quaker poet saw the Virginia slave-holder as he was—a man to be known and respected.

The Portuguese poet Camoëns wrote some of his poems in two languages—Portuguese and Spanish—or, to speak more exactly, occasionally employed both those languages in the same poem. He compared this intellectual feat to walking with one foot in Portugal and the other in Spain. I am reminded of this curious literary freak by the early poems of Mr. Whittier, which illustrated the life of the Present and reproduced the life of the Past. It is not easy to say which had the stronger claim upon his sympathy, for Cassandra Southwick, dead generations before, was as vital in his song as John Randolph, whose dust was scarcely cold. Drawn from the beginning to the legendary lore of New England, he could not be made to see that its aboriginal lore was not equally valuable for poetic purposes. He discarded in "Mogg Megone" the romance which poets and novelists had thrown around the Indian; but the Indian and his belongings still interested his imagination, and would not be laid until made the subject of another poem. He selected an episode which was in itself poetical, or at any rate which might be made so, and proceeded to



write his second Indian story, "The Bridal of Pennacook." His thesis, which he found in Morton's "New Canaan," is thus stated by himself in one of the notes to this poem:

"Winnepurkit, otherwise called George, Sachem of Saugus, married a daughter of Passaconaway, the great Pennacook chieftain, in 1662. The wedding took place at Pennacook (now Concord, New Hampshire), and the ceremonies closed with a great feast. According to the usages of the chiefs, Passaconaway ordered a select number of his men to accompany the newly-married couple to the dwelling of the husband, where in turn there was another great feast. Some time after, the wife of Winnepurkit, expressing a desire to visit her father's house, was permitted to go, accompanied by a brave escort of her husband's chief men. But, when she wished to return, her father sent a messenger to Saugus, informing her husband, and asking him to come and take her away. He returned for answer that he had escorted his wife to her father's house in a style that became a chief, and that now, if she wished to return, her father must send her back in the same way. This Passaconaway refused to do, and it is said that here terminated the connection of his daughter with the Saugus chief."

There is, I think, a poem in this prose statement of "The Bridal of Pennacook," but Mr. Whittier has somehow missed it; possibly because he has indulged too largely in external description. He has divided the subject into eight parts, or sections, and has expended his strength upon each instead of subordinating them to their proper places, and to the general harmony and unity of the poem. The details of these sections, picturesque and otherwise, occupy us too much in the reading, and prevent us from concentrating our attention upon the story itself. We have a feeling, too, that the poet obtrudes himself (unconsciously, of course), and that the manifestations of his personality are as unnecessary as they are unartistic. He does not allow the story to tell itself, but insists upon telling it in an arbitrary fashion of his own, and dwells so long upon insignificant points that when the chief point—the wifely devotion of his heroine—is reached, it has lost all importance. He has bestowed too much care upon some parts of his narratives and too little upon others, and by so doing has shaken our confidence in his judgment. He vexes us, in short, for he has

done justice neither to himself nor to the old story which he undertook to tell.

The primitive colonial and aboriginal life which Mr. Whittier failed to reproduce in "The Bridal of Pennacook" and "Mogg Megone" was thoroughly mastered by him in his next volume of prose, "Margaret Smith's Journal." It purports to be the writing of a young English maiden on a visit to the Province of Massachusetts Bay, in 1678-'9, and who jotted down in her journal whatever struck her as being likely to interest her friends in England. She seized the salient



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points of colonial life, and described the social and religious condition of the colonists, who were much exercised by Quakers and witchcraft. Mistress Margaret contrives to impart her personality to her writing, which is delightful reading—simple, unaffected, womanly, preserving everywhere the local color of the period and the antique flavor of the old colonial records. "Margaret Smith's Journal" is one of a book-shelf of modern antiques, and one of the best, I am inclined to think, being as faithful a reproduction of a by-gone time as "Lady Willoughby's Diary" or "The Maiden and Married Life of Mary Powell."



The writings of Mr. Whittier have hitherto confined themselves to three phases of our national life and history, viz.: to the picturesque savagery of the red men, to episodes of the colonial life of the Puritans and Quakers, and to the consideration of the evils of slavery. His Indian poems are not remarkable, though they are as good as any we have, with the exception, perhaps, of some of Bryant's, which hardly rise above the level of lyrics. His legendary poems are glimpses of the struggle between a set form of faith and the freedom of conscience, and, while they are poetically just to both sides, they leave no doubt in the mind on which side the poet's sympathies are ranged. (What part could a Quaker take, pray, but the part of the wronged and the opposed—the part of his ancestors and brethren? I say brethren advisably, for the New England Quaker of forty years ago was rather a tolerated than a respected member of the community.) His anti-slavery poems were earnest and indignant; earnest in their maintenance of the freedom of all men without regard to color, and indignant at the persecutions of those who sought to restore the rights which had been wrested from them. It was not necessary to be an abolitionist to be moved by these anti-slavery productions of Mr. Whittier; but it was necessary to be a very ardent one in order to find them, or make them, poetical. They were wrung from his heart—torn from his soul; but, strange to say, they made no mark in our literature; they contained no unforgettable verse—no line which the world would not willingly let die. The poet was so overpowered by his inspiration that he forgot to deliver his message.

Mr. Whittier understood the merits and defects of his poems quite as well as, if not better than, most of his critics, and he took an accurate measure of himself in a "Proem," which was written in November, 1847, and was, without doubt, the prologue to one of his volumes of verse, and probably to a collected edition of his poetical works. He loves the songs of Spenser and Sidney, he tells his readers; but he tries in vain to breathe their marvelous notes. They must not expect these, for he has nothing to offer them but the jarring words of one



whose rhyme had beaten the hurried tune of labor and the rugged and stormy march of duty.

“ Of mystic beauty, dreamy grace,  
No rounded art the lack supplies ;  
Unskilled the subtle lines to trace,  
Or softer shades of Nature’s face,  
I view her common forms with unanointed eyes.

“ Nor mine the seer-like power to show  
The secrets of the heart and mind ;  
To drop the plummet-line below  
Our common world of joy and woe,  
A more intense despair, or brighter hope to find.

“ Yet here at least an earnest sense  
Of human right and weal is shown ;  
A hate of tyranny intense,  
And hearty in its vehemence,  
As if my brother’s pain and sorrow were my own.

“ Oh, Freedom ! If to me belong  
Nor mighty Milton’s gift divine,  
Nor Marvell’s wit and graceful song,  
Still with a love as deep and strong  
As theirs, I lay, like them, my best gifts on thy shrine ! ”

Mr. Whittier’s next collection, “Songs of Labor and Other Poems” (1850), marked a change in his practice, if not in his theory, of poetry. He had succeeded in emancipating himself from himself, and had become a writer of objective poems—poems, that is, which were written for their own sake, and not for the sake of any emotion in his own mind. He had mastered his powers, which willingly obeyed his creative impulses, and had set them to work upon material themes, which concern us, and ought to concern us, in spite of all that subjective poets may urge to the contrary. Schiller was the first modern poet who perceived the poetry of common things, and in his “Song of the Bell” he struck the key-note of a succession of similar songs which

have not yet celebrated all the employments of this work-a-day world of ours. This impassioned lyric was the model of Mr. Longfellow in his "Building of the Ship," and of Mr. Whittier in his "Songs of Labor," though it is less apparent in the last, which deal with the poetic capabilities of seven different kinds of labor instead of one, and in a manner which was original with Mr. Whittier, who is a better artist, I think, than the German master, in that his work is more obvious, more picturesque, and more generally intelligible. The human associations which cluster around ship-builders, shoemakers, drovers, fishermen, and the like, are more definite than those which cluster around the molders and casters of bells.

Mr. Whittier was wiser than he knew, I think, when he resolved to be the poet of Labor. A lesser poet would not have ventured to do so, for he would not have considered it poetical, and, even if he could have persuaded himself that it was, he would not have been able to distinguish its poetic from its prosaic element. It belongs to a class of subjects which are not in themselves poetical, though they are made so when the imagination is brought to bear upon them. There is nothing poetical in the act of making shoes, or of driving cattle. Let us see what Mr. Whittier finds in these laborious facts, and what they suggest to him. What does he say to you, disciples of St. Crispin, and fellow-members of the gentle craft of leather?

“ For you, along the Spanish main,  
 A hundred keels are plowing ;  
 For you, the Indian on the plain  
 His lasso-coil is throwing ;  
 For you, deep glens with hemlock dark  
 The woodman’s fire is lighting ;  
 For you, upon the oak’s gray bark,  
 The woodman’s axe is smiting.

“ For you, from Carolina’s pine,  
 The rosin-gum is stealing ;  
 For you, the dark-eyed Florentine  
 Her silken skein is reeling ;

For you, the dizzy goatherd roams  
His rugged Alpine ledges ;  
For you, round all her shepherd homes,  
Bloom England's thorny hedges."

The alchemy which has extracted these stanzas from sole leather, waxed ends, and pegs, ought at least to extract sunbeams from cucumbers.

The associations which cluster around the labors of mankind the world over are poetical, though poets are required to detect them, for they are never found on the surface. They differ among different races, and at different times, but they are substantially the same, nevertheless, for they attach themselves to humanity. They are detected by poets, as I have said, but not by poets of the highest order, who cultivate the idealities and sublimities of their art, and with whom song is literature rather than inspiration. They appeal to the born singers, who never lose their sympathy with the people from whom they spring, no matter how lettered they may afterward become, nor their power of seeing beauty in common things, but who preserve to the end the vision and the faculty divine. Such a poet is Mr. Whittier, who is thoroughly at home in his "Songs of Labor," which have always seemed to me the most characteristic of all his productions, and those by which foreign readers would most readily recognize him as an American poet. They would select, I think, as distinctive of his genius and his country, "The Drovers," "The Fishermen," "The Huskers," and "The Lumbermen."

The "Songs of Labor" are followed (in the complete edition of Mr. Whittier's poetical works) by upward of fifty poems which are ranged under the head of "Miscellaneous." They are divided into classes or groups, "The Angels of Buena Vista," "Barclay of Ury," "The Legend of St. Mark," and "Calef in Boston" ranking among legendary poems; "Worship," "Lines accompanying Manuscripts presented to a Friend," "Channing," "To the Memory of Charles B. Storrs," and "Memories," among personal poems; and "The Reward," "To Pius IX," "The Men of Old," "The Peace Convention at Brus-



sels," and "Seed-time and Harvest," among didactic poems. There is a ripeness of thought about these productions which I do not find in Mr. Whittier's earlier verse, and a noticeable grace and beauty of expression which leave nothing to be desired. "Hampton Beach," for example, is one of Mr. Whittier's faultless poems, its indication of outward nature and its suggestion of a spiritual mood being alike



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perfect. If one wishes to see how the sea from shore has affected two poets, and to feel at the same time their dissimilarity of genius, he should read "Hampton Beach" before or after reading Shelley's "Stanzas written in Dejection near Naples."

The poets of America are distinguished from the poets of Europe by the reserve which they have always maintained in regard to themselves. It is not impossible that the future historian of our literature may detect their personality in

their writings, but he will never, I think, find their writings autobiographic. They held such and such opinions, he may declare, as such and such poems show; but, if he is wise, he will abstain from determining what manner of men they were, and by what emotions they were governed. I do not pretend to account for their reticence, which can hardly be considered a national trait. I merely mention it to deplore it, for I am interested in knowing the inner lives of

men of genius. Mr. Whittier's poetry does not help me to an understanding of this concealed life of his, but he hints at it, if I am not mistaken, in the poem entitled "Memories," which lies like a pearl among the lesser jewels scattered over his legendary and didactic poems, and which is inexpressibly beautiful and pathetic. It is like a palimpsest whose original writing has been effaced that something later might be copied in its stead, present pains of memory over the departed pleasures of hope, lamentations in place of canticles. To those who can read between the lines, where the mystery is, it is a passport into the uncreated, or destroyed, world of possibilities.

Mr. Whittier is given to the writing of occasional poems, and, if he is not so successful in this journalistic walk of verse as some of his contemporaries, it is because his cleverness is not equal to his genius. When he does succeed, as in his lines on "Randolph of Roanoke," and in "Ichabod," he ranks among the greatest masters of poetic portraiture. A great man sat for his portrait in "Ichabod"—a man whom New England still delights to honor for his great intellectual endowments, but who fell from his high estate because he dared to differ with New England in a question of political morals. How far he was right, and how far he was wrong, is a problem which does not concern me. I leave it to the Muse of History, who is less hasty in reaching conclusions, and in pronouncing judgment, than the more impassioned Muse of Song. I content myself with saying that Webster disappointed the moral sense of New England by the stand he took about the Fugitive Slave Law, and was sternly and sadly reprobated, even by his admirers. Mr. Whittier grieved over his defection, but with a noble manliness that was as honorable to Webster as to himself. He was too great to revile and insult him, though he lamented him as we lament the dead.

"Of all we loved and honored, naught  
Save power remains—  
A fallen angel's pride of thought,  
Still strong in chains.



“ All else is gone ; from those great eyes  
 The soul is fled ;  
 When faith is lost, when honor dies,  
 The man is dead !

“ Then, pay the reverence of old days  
 To his dead fame ;  
 Walk backward, with averted gaze,  
 And hide the shame !”

I hardly know how to characterize some of Mr. Whittier's poems, such, for example, as the leading poem in his next collection, “The Chapel of the Hermits and other Poems” (1852). “The Chapel of the Hermits” is based upon an incident related in a note to St. Pierre's “*Études de la Nature*”:

“ We arrived at the habitation of the hermits a little before they sat down to their table, and while they were still at church. J. J. Rousseau proposed to me to offer up our devotions. The hermits were reciting the Litanies of Providence, which are remarkably beautiful. After we had addressed our prayers to God, and the hermits were proceeding to the refectory, Rousseau said to me, with his heart overflowing, ‘ At this moment I experience what is said in the Gospel : “ Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” There is here a feeling of peace and happiness which penetrates the soul.’ I said, ‘ If Fénelon had lived you would have been a Catholic.’ He exclaimed, with tears in his eyes, ‘ Oh ! if Fénelon were alive, I would struggle to get into his service, even as a lackey ! ’”

I am not prepared to say that this little incident is too slight to base a poem on ; but I think that no poem based on it is likely to make a mark in literature, for, no matter how it may be treated, it still remains a trifle. Its strongest suggestion is the contrast afforded by the characters of Rousseau and St. Pierre, and the dramatic propriety of the opinions which they utter, and which certainly ought to be rememberable. I do not feel this contrast as I could wish in Mr. Whittier's poem, and I am not impressed by the conversation of his theologians. The art of saying things, which is so conspicuous in



"Ichabod" and "Randolph of Roanoke," is as absent here as it is gloriously present in the poem which succeeds it—"Questions of Life"—and which abounds in felicitous thoughts and expressions. The poet questions Nature in regard to himself, but obtains no answer. He questions men, but they are silent:

"Alas! the dead retain their trust;  
Dust hath no answer from the dust."

Nothing answers him, for his heart, like that of the prophet, hath gone too far in this world, and he thinketh to comprehend the way of the Most High.

"Here let me pause, my quest forego;  
Enough for me to feel and know  
That He in whom the cause and end,  
The past and future, meet and blend—  
Who, girt with his immensities,  
Our vast and star-hung system sees  
Small as the clustered Pleiades—  
Moves not alone the heavenly choirs,  
But waves the spring-time's grassy spires;  
Guards not archangel feet alone,  
But deigns to guide and keep my own;  
Speaks not alone the words of fate  
Which worlds destroy, and worlds create,  
But whispers in my spirit's ear,  
In tones of love, or warning fear,  
A language none beside may hear."

The ethical or moral element which is the motive and inspiration of such poems as "The Chapel of the Hermits" is never absent for any length of time from Mr. Whittier's poetry. I do not place it among high poetic endowments, though it may be allied to them; nor do I think it is always wisely employed by Mr. Whittier. If there ever was a time when poets were moral teachers, that time has long since past. They are at most lay preachers now, and that not of set

purpose, but by indirection. Mr. Whittier did not perceive this as clearly as could be wished, and his poetry has suffered in consequence. "The Hermit of the Thebaid"—a little apologue in his next collection, "The Panorama, and Other Poems" (1856)—is an example in point. The poem is too long by seven stanzas, the stanzas in question being those which open the poem, to which they are prefixed by way of text, stating in different forms the thesis which the poem is expected to prove—in other words, the meaning of the apologue. Mr. Whittier should have trusted entirely to his subject, which contained within itself all his readers should know; their understanding of it did not concern him, but themselves. I find this overmuchness of explanation in other American poets, but never in Bryant, whose greatness as a poetic artist has never been fully understood.

"The Hermit of Thebaid" is one of a particular class of Mr. Whittier's poems which are nearly faultless, and which are permanent additions to the ethical poems of all nations. They lend such value as they possess to the writings of the mystics and the poets of the East; and lucky is the poet who finds them and perceives their poetic significance, as Mr. Whittier does. A new element appears in this collection of Mr. Whittier's verse in "The Barefoot Boy," an exquisite character study, which, as far as my recollection goes, has no parallel in English poetry. The old anti-slavery element is here in a new form, in the poem entitled "The Haschish," which is an admirable piece of humorous sarcasm:

"The preacher eats, and straight appears  
His Bible in a new translation;  
Its angels negro overseers,  
And Heaven itself a snug plantation!"

"The man of peace, about whose dreams  
The sweet millennial angels cluster,  
Tastes the mad weed, and plots and schemes,  
A raving Cuban filibuster!"

It is not given to many poets to know what they do best, and the few who possess that knowledge are seldom content to be guided by

it. The weakness of modern poets—or one of their weaknesses—is the desire to write long poems, as if poetry were measured by quantity and not quality. Another weakness is a studied avoidance of simple every-day themes. Mr. Whittier has mistaken his powers as little as any American poet, but he has not always cultivated them wisely, or he would have written ten narrative poems where he has written one. I use the word narrative in a large sense as covering a class of poems of which story-telling is the chief motive, and which directly appeal to the human sympathies of their readers. Such a poem (to draw an illustration from Mr. Whittier) is the touching ballad of “Cassandra Southwick.” Another is “Barclay of Ury.” Mr. Whittier is the first American poet, I believe, who was deeply impressed by the inspiration of subjects like these, and they have amply rewarded the poetic pains he has bestowed upon them. I am not sure, indeed, that his fame will not ultimately rest upon some three or four of them—say upon “Maud Muller,” “Skipper Ireson’s Ride,” and “Telling the Bees.” They had no prototypes in American poetry, and, if they have had successors, these successors have come from the pen of Mr. Whittier, who is never so much himself as when writing narrative and legendary stories.

Mr. Whittier is one of the few American poets who have succeeded in obtaining the suffrages of the reading public and of the literary class. Men of letters respect his work for its sincerity, simplicity, and downright manliness, and average readers of poetry respect it because they can understand it. There is not a grown man and woman in the land who does not readily enter into the aspiration and discontent of “Maud Muller,” and into the glowing patriotism of “Barbara Frietchie.” Whether the incident which is the inspiration of the latter ever occurred, is more than doubtful; nevertheless, the poem is one that the world will not willingly let die. The reputation of such poems is immediate and permanent, and beyond criticism, favorable or otherwise; the touch of nature in them is beyond all art. I should never think of comparing “Barbara Frietchie” with Bryant’s “O Mother of a Mighty Race,” but I am sure that it has a thousand read-



ers where Bryant's poem has one. Bryant seldom reached the hearts of his countrymen, but his best poems appealed to what was loftiest in their intellects.

If I wished to give an intelligent foreigner an idea of Mr. Whittier's genius, and an idea of the characteristics of American poetry at



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the same time, I should ask him to read Mr. Whittier's "Snow-bound" (1865). This exquisite poem has no prototype in English literature, unless Burns's "Cotter's Saturday Night" be one, and it will be long, I fear, before it has a companion-piece. It can be fully appreciated

only by those who are New England born, and on whose heads the snows of fifty or sixty winters have fallen. One must have been snow-bound in order to recognize the faithfulness of Mr. Whittier's pictures of winter life and landscape, and to enjoy the simple pleasures of a country homestead in a great snow-storm. There was nothing to do, while it lasted, but to keep indoors, and nothing to do, when it had ceased, but to dig one's way out into the little world of the village again. The snow-bound family whom he describes was his father's family, who are clearly set before us in their different individualities, and their conversation is such as they no doubt indulged in, for it is thoroughly in keeping with the time and the place. Father Whittier told stories of camping on the wooded side of Memphremagog, of idyllic ease beneath the hemlock trees of St. François, and of moon-light dances to the sound of a violin, and similar pleasures of memory. Mother Whittier (who ran the new-knit stocking-heel) told how the Indian hordes came down on Cocheco, and how her own great-uncle bore his cruel scalp-mark to fourscore. Then the uncle spoke of what he had seen and known in the lore of woods and fields, of which he was a loving student. The unmarried aunt had her tales of huskings and apple-bees, of summer sails and sleigh-rides. And the poet's sisters were there, snow-bound now, alas, in "death's eternal cold." There, too, was the village school-master, whom everybody liked, and who could turn his hand to anything. They were a pleasant company, and pleasantly situated, all things considered. For, while the north wind roared without, the red logs blazed before them, and the flames roared up the great throat of the chimney, while the house-dog laid his drowsy head on his paws, and the dark silhouette of the cat was drawn on the wall.

“ And, for the winter fireside meet,  
Between the andiron's straddling feet,  
The mug of cider simmered slow,  
The apples sputtered in a row.  
And, there at hand, the basket stood  
With nuts from brown October's wood.”

The materials upon which "Snow-bound" is based are of the slightest order, and the wonder is that any poet, even the most skillful one, could have made a poem out of them. I should not say that Mr. Whittier was a skillful poet, but he has made a poem which will live, and can no more be rivaled by any winter poetry that may be written hereafter than "Thanatopsis" can be rivaled as a meditation on the universality of death. The characters in this little idyl are carefully drawn, and the quiet of the homestead during the storm is in striking contrast to the outdoor bustle which succeeds it. There is no evidence anywhere that the poem cost a moment's labor; everything is naturally introduced, and the reflections, which are manly and pathetic, are among the finest that Mr. Whittier has ever written. "Snow-bound" at once authenticated itself as an idyl of New England life and manners.

In "The Tent on the Beach, and Other Poems" (1867), we had Mr. Whittier in his character of a story-teller again, with a wider range than he had hitherto shown in his choice of subjects. He added variety to the tales that were told in "The Tent on the Beach" by a framework of verse similar to that employed by Mr. Longfellow in his "Tales of a Wayside Inn," but he added nothing to the poetic value of the tales themselves by this framework, or by the conversation which his summer guests held in the intervals of narration. It is not difficult to recognize three of them, Mr. James T. Fields being the "lettered magnate" who could

"well the market value tell  
Of poet and philosopher";

Mr. Whittier himself being the dreamer,

"Who, with a mission to fulfill,  
Had left the Muses' haunts to turn  
The crank of an opinion mill";

and Mr. Bayard Taylor, the gentleman whose Arab face was tanned by tropic suns and boreal frost, and who



“ In idling mood had from him hurled  
The poor squeezed orange of the world.”

The literary workmanship of Mr. Whittier has improved, I think, from year to year, and in reading his last volume we may be sure that we have the best art of which he is capable. I do not rank him high as an artist, though he has art enough to answer his purposes generally. Poetry seems never to have been a pursuit with him, but a charge which was intrusted to him, and which he was to deliver when the spirit moved him, well or ill, as it happened, but honestly, earnestly, and prayerfully. He has a noble vein of sacred poetry in his nature, and, had he chosen, might have enriched the world's store of hymnology as no other living poet could have done. His seriousness of soul, the intense morality of his genius, accounts, I think, for his defects as a poetical artist in such poems as “The Chapel of the Hermits,” for example, in “Among the Hills, and Other Poems” (1868), in “Miriam, and Other Poems” (1870), and in “The Pennsylvanian Pilgrim, and Other Poems” (1872). The motives of these poems, especially the last, seem to me too slight for the superstructures which he had builded upon and around them. I question, indeed, whether he would have selected Francis Daniel Pastorius as a hero if he had not drawn up the first protest made in America by a religious body against negro slavery. That Mr. Whittier has written a charming poem about him I admit, but I see nothing heroic in him, though he was a remarkable man.

What I like best in Mr. Whittier's poetry I have endeavored to indicate, though I have by no means consulted my liking alone. It has been my aim, as it was certainly my business, to judge his work from his own point of view—in other words, to put myself in his place. I fear I have not succeeded at all times. I know I have not succeeded as well as he would have done had he analyzed the poetry of Mr. Longfellow, say, or Mr. Lowell. He is a remarkable critic of character, as he proved in his “Randolph of Roanoke,” in “Ichabod,” in “Summer,” and in the poem entitled “My Namesake,” a keen,

searching examination of his mental qualities and of the intention and scope of his poetry. It is more accurate and more comprehensive than any criticism on his genius that I can hope to write, and it states, I am inclined to think, what will be the just verdict of Posterity. No living poet—certainly no living American poet—can more safely trust his work and his memory to the keeping of that august Power than John Greenleaf Whittier.



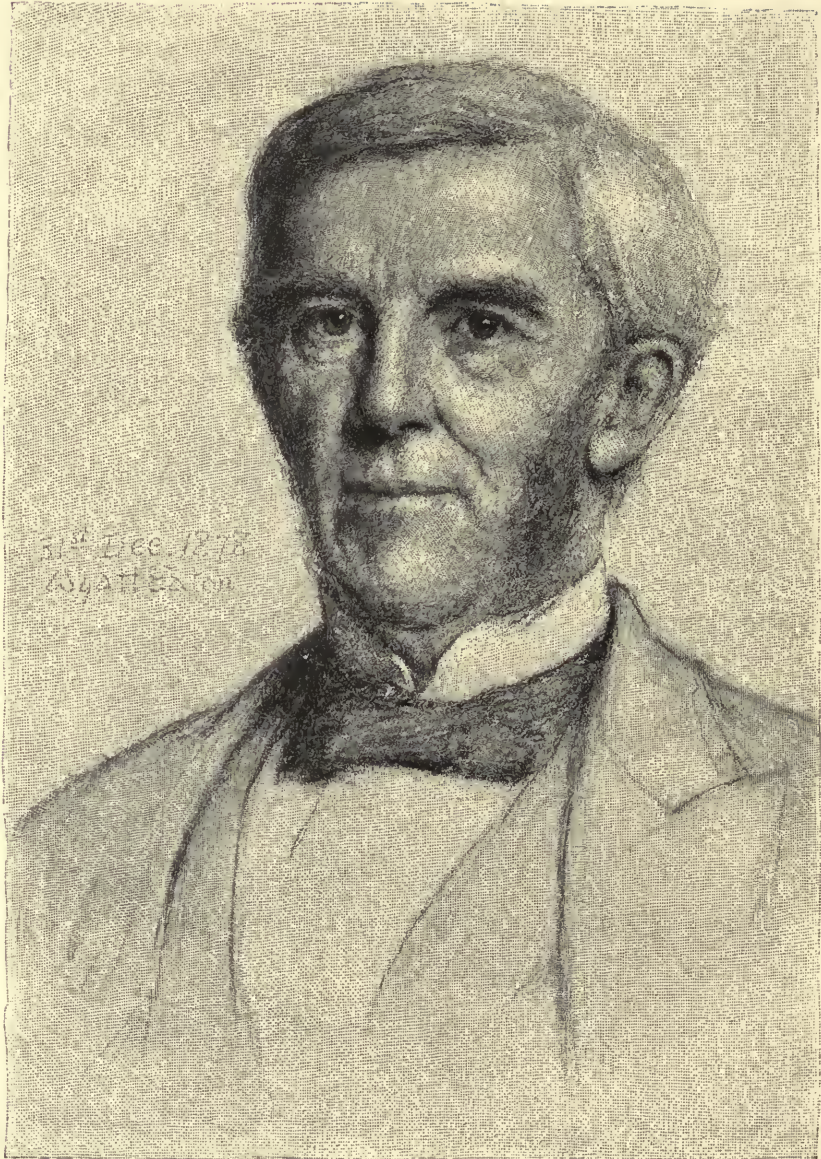
MURMURING BROOKS.





70 and  
August 1878

T. Colv.









...And if I should live to be  
The last leaf upon the tree  
In the Spring,  
Let them smile, as I do now,  
At the old forsaken bough  
Where I cling.

Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Boston, March 27<sup>th</sup> 1879.



## OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.



STAIRWAY IN THE OLD HOLMES MANSION.

DR. HOLMES has so often described his own homes and haunts that a biographer has only the agreeable labor of reading again the pages that pleased him when they were new, and culling from them the facts that he needs, wreathed round, as they are, with the arabesques and grotesques of the laughing poet's fancy. For our Yankee Lucilius has gone beyond the

copy set him by Horace's predecessor, who exposed his whole life to view, as if it were depicted on a memorial window.

*"Ille, velut fidis arcana sodalibus, olim  
Credebat libris; neque, si male cesserat, usquam  
Decurrens alio, neque si bene: quo fit ut omnis  
Votiva pateat veluti descripta tabella  
Vita senis."*

Dr. Holmes has not only set up this votive tablet in public places, but has had the chapel-windows heliotyped, and has sent the copies



over the whole world wherever the "Atlantic" is read, or the literary renown of Boston is known. Nay, he was doing this before there was any "Atlantic," except the unprinted salt-water magazine of that name, and almost from the moment that he began to recite verses in public, which was very long ago. The first that made him known, he says, "I wrote with a pencil in the White Chamber, *stans pede in uno*, pretty nearly"—meaning "Old Ironsides," which was written about 1830 in the old gambrel-roofed house on Cambridge Common, where he was born, August 29, 1809. And these verses he recited in his first Phi Beta Kappa poem, read at Harvard College in August, 1836, pointing, no doubt, toward his father's parsonage house, as he stood in the neighboring church, and said:

"From yon lone attic, on a summer's morn,  
He mocked the spoilers with his school-boy scorn."

Six and thirty years afterward, when the university bought this old parsonage house, Dr. Holmes described it at length in prose, as he had often done before in detail. It still stands, little changed in outward form since the days when Ward and Warren, Putnam and Washington occupied or visited it in 1775, when it was the head-quarters of the American army then besieging Boston, and when Prescott marched away from it toward Bunker Hill, and Benedict Arnold received there his first military commission.

Unlike many of these gambrel-roofed houses which are seen all over New England, the birthplace of Dr. Holmes was not built for the manse of the parish minister—as was the Emerson and Ripley parsonage house at Concord—but was first the residence of a prosperous tailor, and then of a wealthy farmer, Jonathan Hastings, whom the college students in Sam Adams's day used to call "Yankee Jont," and whose son was the college steward in 1775. The Hastings family occupied the house till it was sold to the clergy, its first clerical occupant being Eliphalet Pearson, the Hebrew professor, in 1792, from whom it passed, about 1807, into the hands of the Reverend Abiel Holmes, father of the poet, and himself not without pretensions to

that name. For did not Dr. Holmes, the parson, in 1804, publish in the Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, of which he was a distinguished member (as his son is), the translation of a Latin poem by Stephen Parmenius, of Buda, in celebration of the voyage of Raleigh's half-brother, "the illustrious and valiant knight, Sir Humphrey Gilbert"? This Dr. Holmes was the son of a Connecticut Dr. Holmes, a physician at Woodstock, who had first been a captain in the French and Indian War, and afterward a surgeon in the Revolutionary army. The Reverend Abiel Holmes was born in 1763, graduated at Yale College in 1783, alternated between preaching in Georgia and tutoring in Yale College until 1791, and in 1792 was settled in the ministry at Cambridge, his parish including Harvard College, whose president and professors were among his hearers for many years. In 1790 he married Mary, the daughter of President Stiles, of Yale, whose biographer he became a few years later, when that learned and good man died. Mrs. Holmes had died before her father, and in 1801 Mr. Holmes was married again to Sarah Wendell, the daughter of Judge Oliver Wendell, who became the mother of all his children. The wife of Oliver Wendell was Mary Jackson, daughter of Dorothy Quincy, the lady celebrated by Dr. Holmes in his poem, "Dorothy Q." Our illustration of the portrait shows the rent from an English rapier, mentioned in the poem :

"Look ! there's a rent the light shines through,  
Dark with a century's fringe of dust—  
That was a Red-coat's rapier thrust !  
Such is the tale the lady old,  
Dorothy's daughter's daughter, told.

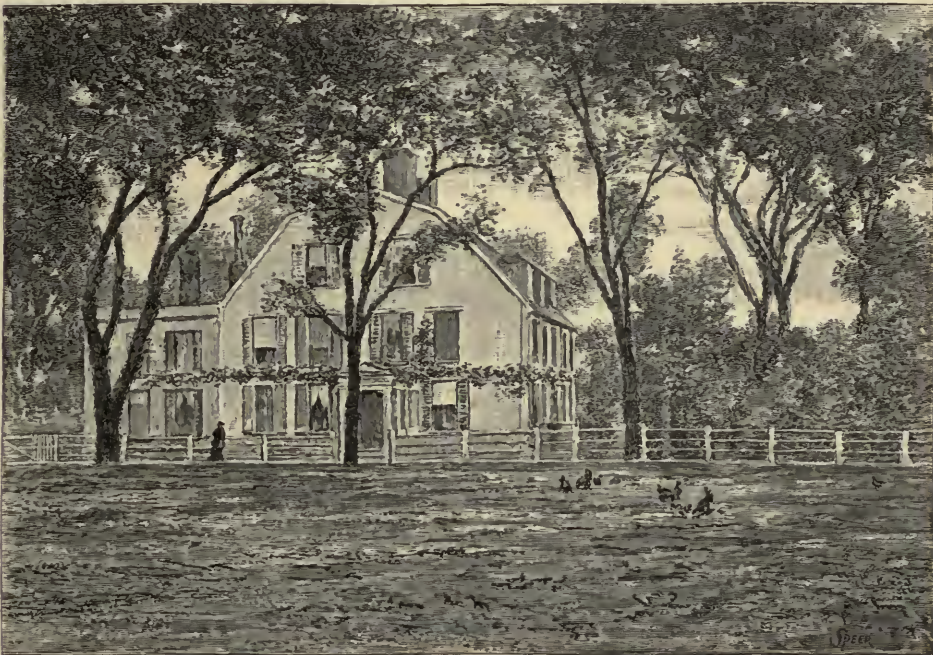
The oldest son was named for his grandfather, Wendell, who in his turn was descended from various Wendells, Olivers, Quincys, Bradstreets, etc., the colonial and provincial aristocracy of Boston. The original Wendell was a Dutchman from Albany, and the original Bradstreet was the old charter governor, Simon Bradstreet, whose wife, Anne Dudley, daughter of Governor Dudley, was the

first New England poetess, and the ancestress of a large brood of literary descendants—among them the Channings, Danas, and Phillips. Judge Wendell bought the house for his daughter, Mrs. Holmes; at his death, in 1818, bequeathed it to her, and she continued to live in it until her death. Dr. Holmes, her husband, died in 1837, when his famous son was but twenty-six old; but even then he had published his first volume of poems, and had an established literary reputation, though it did not extend far beyond Cambridge and Boston. He took his doctor's degree in medicine in 1836, was made professor of anatomy at Dartmouth College in 1838, and at Harvard College in 1847; but his degrees in literature were taken much earlier.

Though born in a community then tending strongly to Arminianism and Unitarianism, and himself in later years one of the most advanced liberals in theology, Oliver Wendell Holmes was bred a Calvinist of the stricter sort, and, therefore, when he left the paternal gambrel roof to go to school, he was sent to Andover, because Andover was "orthodox," rather than to Exeter, where Dr. Abbot, with Arminian tendencies, was educating the future statesmen and divines of New England. Eliphalet Pearson, the Hebrew professor of Cambridge, who aspired to be the college president, as Dr. Holmes hints, had shaken off the Socinian dust from his feet when the election of Dr. Ware to a Harvard professorship showed the Calvinists they could no longer control the college, and had gone back to Andover to take part in the newly-opened theological school there, which soon grew to be more important than the Phillips Academy in the same town. It was to the latter that Dr. Holmes, the Cambridge minister, sent his son Wendell soon after 1820, hoping, perhaps, that, after his graduation there and at college, he would return to Andover to study theology. But the boy had seen too much of ministers in his father's parsonage to have a longing for the clerical profession. "I remember one in particular," he says, "who twitted me so with my blessings as a Christian child, and whined so to me about the naked black children, that he did more in that one day to make me a heathen than he had ever done in a



month to make a Christian out of an infant Hottentot. I might have been a minister myself, for aught I know, if this clergyman had not looked and talked so like an undertaker." No doubt the Reverend Abiel Holmes, who was a true type of the New England orthodox minister, would have given much gold, and did offer many prayers, that his son should also preach and pray from a wooden pulpit in a yellow meeting-house, and sit on the platform at college commence-



BIRTHPLACE OF DOCTOR HOLMES, CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

ments along with the "*reverendis ecclesiæ passim pastoribus*," so affectionately appealed to on such occasions by the graduating class. But the reaction against ministers had already set in when the celebrated class of 1829 left college, and Wendell Holmes, after some little delay, chose medicine for his profession, studied it awhile in Cambridge and Boston, and in 1832 went to Europe to pursue the same studies there, at Paris and elsewhere. Before he left home—nay, before he left Andover, in 1825, at the age of sixteen—he had courted the muses.

The volume of his collected poems now contains, modestly relegated to its last page, a school-boy exercise written at Andover when he was fifteen, which disclosed even at that age his fluency in versification. It is a translation into the measure of Pope and Goldsmith of those lines in the First Book of Virgil's "*Æneid*," in which Neptune is described as quelling the storm that Juno had raised against the Trojan fleet. How smoothly flow these orders of the indignant god to the boisterous Zephyrus and Eurus!

“ Is this your glory in a noble line,  
To leave your confines and to ravage mine ?  
Whom I—but let these troubled waves subside—  
Another tempest and I'll quell your pride !  
Go bear our message to your master's ear,  
That wide as ocean I am despot here ;  
Let him sit monarch in his barren caves !  
I wield the trident and control the waves.”

This is a lively sea-piece, as Virgil wrote it, and as the young poet translated it; and so was the first original poem of Wendell Holmes that attracted notice—his verses on the frigate *Constitution*—“*Old Ironsides*”—which he wrote and sent to the Boston “*Advertiser*” in 1830, when it was proposed to break up the old vessel at the Charlestown Navy-yard, within cannon sound of the Cambridge parsonage. The collegian protested against this desecration of a national vessel that had been the first to make an English ship strike her flag, and thus pictured the now forgotten fight between the *Constitution* and the *Guerriere*:

“ Her deck, once red with heroes' blood,  
Where knelt the vanquished foe,  
When winds were hurrying o'er the flood,  
And waves were white below,  
No more shall feel the victor's tread,  
Or know the conquered knee ;  
The harpies of the shore shall pluck  
The eagle of the sea !”

Other verses, serious or humorous, or a mixture of the two, soon followed the first success—among them “The Last Leaf,” which still ranks as one of Holmes’s best poems. In it occur those lines which the neighboring church-yard, seen from his attic window every day of his life in the gambrel-roofed house, might well suggest:

“ The mossy marbles rest  
On the lips that he has prest  
In their bloom,  
And the names he loved to hear  
Have been carved for many a year  
On the tomb.”

In these early pieces, and in the poem of 1836, whose subject is “Poetry,” we see for once a contradiction of that saying of Dryden’s in his pathetic elegy on his young disciple, Oldham:

“ O early ripe ! to thy abundant store  
What could advancing age have added more ?  
It might (*what nature never gives the young*)  
Have taught the numbers of thy native tongue.”

More true to young Holmes’s case is that couplet of Pope concerning himself and his precocious poetry:

“ As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,  
I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came.”

Easy publication was found in “The Collegian” and other transitory periodicals for these early verses, so easily written, and they soon acquired the popularity they have never lost. The finer passages in them were slower in coming to the appreciation of the wise; but in due time Lowell, in the “Fable for Critics,” set the stamp of approval on Holmes’s description of Rouget de L’Isle composing the Marseillaise, ending with that vigorous couplet,

“ His taper faded ; and the morning gales  
Swept through the world the war-song of Marseilles.”



There is another passage in the same "Phi Beta" poem of 1836 which shows how well the young poet had made his observations both in Europe and America; it is this:

" On other shores, above their moldering towns,  
In sullen pomp the tall cathedral frowns,  
Pride in its aisles and paupers at the door,  
Which feeds the beggars whom it fleeced of yore.  
Simple and frail, our lowly temples throw  
Their slender shadows on the paths below;  
Scarce steal the winds that sweep her woodland tracks  
The larch's perfume from the settler's axe,  
Ere, like a vision of the morning air,  
His slight-framed steeple marks the house of prayer;  
Its planks all reeking and its paint undried,  
Its rafters sprouting on the shady side,  
It sheds the raindrops from its shingled eaves  
Ere its green brothers once have changed their leaves."

Of the European tour, as Dr. Holmes made it in the years when he was fitting himself for his doctor's degree in the hospitals and lecture-rooms of Paris and Edinburgh, we find many memorials scattered through his poems and prose works. He describes now a scene which he saw in Paris, then the ruins of a Roman aqueduct, or some English or Scotch incident, or what happened to him when quarantined at Marseilles; but otherwise little is known of those years from 1832 to 1835. They were gay, but not idle years; indeed, idleness can never be associated with so lively a person, and few men have, in fact, been more industrious. His chosen profession did not bring him a great practice, but he passed so soon into the duties of a medical professor that there was not much room for practice to grow up. Perhaps, too, there was some distrust of his brilliancy, as he intimates in a passage that yet must not be taken too seriously.

" Besides—my prospects—don't you know that people won't employ  
A man that wrongs his manliness by laughing like a boy?

And suspect the azure blossom that unfolds upon a shoot,  
As if wisdom's old potato could not flourish at its root ?  
It's a vastly pleasing prospect, when you're screwing out a laugh,  
That your very next year's income is diminished by a half,  
And a little boy trips barefoot that Pegasus may go,  
And the baby's milk is watered that your Helicon may flow !  
So I think I will not go with you to hear the toasts and speeches,  
But stick to old Montgomery Place and have some pig and peaches."

"Old Montgomery Place" is a little court running out of Tremont Street, in Boston, not far from that State House which is the Hub of the Universe, and still nearer to the Music Hall and the Great Organ, which used to be the boast of Boston, and which Dr. Holmes so lovingly described in the "Atlantic." From the house on Montgomery Place, had he staid there long enough, he might have heard this organ playing, but he moved out of it about the time Mr. Lowell, in 1857, called upon him to aid in the magazine work of the "Atlantic." In the first of those books which appeared serially in the Boston "Monthly" from 1857 to 1872—the "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table"—Dr. Holmes gives some account of the many mansions in which he had lived, and, first, of this Montgomery Place dwelling-house, at the left hand, next the farther corner, where he lived, as he says, "not twenty years, but pretty near it." It was his first home after leaving the parsonage at Cambridge, with the elms and lilacs about it; in it all his children were born, and established fame was won. "When he entered that door, two shadows glided over the threshold; five lingered in the doorway when he passed through it for the last time, and one of the shadows was claimed by its owner to be longer than his own. What changes he saw in that quiet place! Death rained through every roof but his; children came into life, grew to maturity, wedded, faded away, threw themselves away; the whole drama of life was played in that stock company's theater of a dozen houses, one of which was his, and no deep sorrow or severe calamity ever entered his dwelling in that little court where he lived in gay loneliness so long." This Boston home was his abiding place, but each year, from 1838 on-

ward, he went up among the New Hampshire hills to give medical lectures at Dartmouth College, in the pleasant village of Hanover, on the Connecticut. This river he describes, "where it comes loitering down from its mountain fastnesses like a great lord, swallowing up the small proprietary rivulets very quietly as it goes"; and also the



PORTRAIT OF DOROTHY QUINCY ("DOROTHY Q."), SHOWING INJURIES RECEIVED FROM AN ENGLISH RAPIER DURING THE REVOLUTION.

inn where he sojourned during his lectures, "that caravansary on the banks of the stream, where Ledyard launched his log canoe, and the jovial old Colonel used to lead the Commencement processions, where blue Ascutney looked down from the far distance." Later on in his early career as a medical professor he seems to have given lectures, too,



at the Berkshire Medical School in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, and for some years, for this or other reasons, he fixed his summer residence in that town, not far from where Hawthorne was then living at Lenox. Hawthorne had before this seen the genius of Holmes, and in his one contribution to Lowell's magazine, the "Pioneer," in 1843, the Concord romancer had turned a period with the young professor's name. In his "Hall of Fantasy" among the poets he saw some "talking in groups, with a liveliness of expression, or ready smile, and a light intellectual laughter, which showed how rapidly the shafts of wit were glancing to and fro among them. In the most vivacious of these," says Hawthorne, "I recognized Holmes"; and in this portraiture he shows how well, even then, he understood the lively, social, clubable Bostonian. This vivacity has never deserted Holmes, and attracts the notice of all who meet him for the first time. Thus the late Dr. Appleton, an English metaphysician and Oxford scholar, when he visited Boston, in 1875, dined with the Saturday Club, of which Holmes was one of the chief wits, and was struck with his bird-like vivacity. He remembered, too, what the stammering Charles Kingsley had said at finding himself quite out-talked by Holmes a few years earlier.

In this "Hall of Fantasy," which corresponded, after a fashion, to that imagined by Hawthorne, Dr. Appleton met Emerson, Lowell, Holmes, Peirce, Howells, and Mark Twain, and thus records his impressions of Holmes in a blunt English manner :

"Dr. Holmes was highly talkative and agreeable ; he converses very much like the Autocrat of the Breakfast Table—wittily, and in a literary way, but, perhaps, with too great an infusion of physiological and medical metaphor. He is a little deaf, and has a mouth like the beak of a bird ; indeed, he is, with his small body and quick movements, very like a bird in his general aspect. When poor Kingsley was in Boston he met Holmes, who came in, frisked about and talked incessantly, Kingsley intervening with a few words only occasionally. At last Holmes whisked himself away, saying, "And now I must go." "He is an insp-sp-sp-ired j-j-j-h-ack-daw," said Kingsley."

This smart saying of the Englishman reminds one of Goldsmith, who "wrote like an angel and talked like poor Poll," more than of Holmes, who is a brilliant talker, flashing with wit, but, like most wits, not knowing exactly when to leave off. In poetry he is the legitimate successor of Goldsmith, but in prose he has a manner of his own, and in conversation he is worthy to be matched with the best diners-out in England. His good sayings are innumerable, nor have they all got into his books, in spite of the constant temptation offered to a writer who has been so much in demand. At this same Saturday Club, years before, as one of his companions was setting forth for a drive of twenty miles into the country, Dr. Holmes asked him to take a glass of punch before going, which was declined. "Do," said the wit; "it shortens the distance and doubles the prospect."

But to return to the Pittsfield summer abode "up among those hills that shut in the amber-flowing Housatonic, in the home overlooking the winding stream, and the smooth, flat meadow; looked down upon by wild hills, where the tracks of bears and catamounts may yet sometimes be seen upon the winter snow." These are the words of the Autocrat, depicting "the maple-shadowed plains of Berkshire," near which at that time lived not only Hawthorne, but Herman Melville, and Miss Sedgwick, and Fanny Kemble, while occasionally Bryant and Ellery Channing, from New York and Concord, found their way to the Lenox and Stockbridge hills. Dr. Holmes could not long live anywhere except among men and women of culture; the solitude of Nature had little charm for him unless his friends were near him; but, wherever he has dwelt, he has paid the local dues by writing occasional poems for the festive seasons. So at Pittsfield, in 1849, he read a poem on "The Plowman," at the Berkshire cattle show dinner in October, and in it made his sketch of the Pittsfield plowing-team:

"Clear the brown path to meet his colter's gleam!  
Lo! on he comes behind his smoking team;  
Still where he treads the stubborn clods divide,  
The smooth, fresh furrow opens deep and wide;

Matted and dense the tangled turf upheaves,  
 Mellow and dark the ridgy cornfield cleaves ;  
 Through the moist valley, clogged with oozing clay,  
 The patient convoy breaks its destined way ;  
 At every turn the loosening chains resound,  
 The swinging plowshare circles glistening round,  
 Till the wide field one billowy waste appears,  
 And wearied hands unbind the panting steers."

This is a perfect picture of the Berkshire farmer of thirty years ago, and of the land which he tilled then and now. There is more of this poetic landscape in another of the Pittsfield poems, read at the dedication of the village cemetery in September, 1850. In that garden of graves he says the plowman shall toil no longer, though once his furrow there uncovered the Indian arrow-head :

"Still on its slopes the plowman's ridges show  
 The pointed flints that left his fatal bow,  
 Chipped with rough art and slow barbarian toil—  
 Last of his wrecks that strews the alien soil.

. . . . .  
 No more, when April sheds her fitful rain,  
 The sower's hand shall cast its flying grain ;  
 No more, when Autumn strews the flaming leaves,  
 The reaper's band shall gird its yellow sheaves.  
 For there alike the circling seasons flow,  
 Till the first blossoms heave the latest snow."

You might almost fancy Goldsmith transported to Massachusetts and writing such lines as these, with a little more antithesis than when he pictured the "Deserted Village," but with the same observant eye and tender heart. Like Goldsmith, Dr. Holmes had a traditional and ancestral interest in the scenery he described. The township of Pontoosuc, now Pittsfield, was bought by his great grandfather, Jacob Wendell, about 1734, including 24,000 acres, and Dr. Holmes's mother, the grandchild of Jacob Wendell (who was born at Albany in 1691, but removed to Boston and married the daughter of Dr. James Oliver),



seems to have retained a slight family interest in the remains of this purchase. Her son relates that every year, in his boyhood, his father, Parson Holmes, would have his horse and chaise harnessed up, and



VIEW OF LENOX.

set forth with his wife on a fortnight's excursion to the Berkshire hills, whither, to be sure, the young poet never accompanied them. Nor did he visit Albany or Pittsfield till after he had returned from Europe, sailing down the Rhine before he sailed up the Hudson or floated in his boat on the Housatonic. But when he saw the Wendell acres, after his marriage in 1840, he coveted the possession of a small part thereof, and so established himself for half the year at what he christened "Canoe Place," in the meadows of the Housatonic. Perhaps the river's name attracted him, as it did the two boys, Lothrop Motley and Wendell Phillips, when the future historian of Holland began in Boston his first novel, at the age of eleven. "I remember," writes Mr. Phillips to his cousin, Wendell Holmes, "that Motley's

novel opened not with one solitary horseman, but with two, riding up to an inn in the valley of the Housatonic. Neither of us had ever seen the Housatonic, but it sounded grand and romantic."

It is worth mentioning here that Wendell Holmes, like his kinsman, Wendell Phillips, at first studied law after leaving college, and that young Motley, who was then at the same college, was, like Holmes, a contributor to the "*Collegian*," a lively Cambridge magazine, edited by John O. Sargent. In 1833, before going abroad to study medicine, Wendell Holmes united with Epes Sargent, and the brother-in-law of Motley, Park Benjamin, in writing a gift-book, called the "*Harbinger*," for the benefit of Dr. Howe's Blind Asylum, then in its infancy; and forty-three years afterward Dr. Holmes joined in paying funeral honors to Dr. Howe, and wrote a poem recounting the achievements of that philanthropist. After returning from Europe, and while beginning the practice of medicine in Boston, Dr. Holmes met Motley often at the home of Park Benjamin in Temple Place, and their association became so intimate that Holmes, after Motley's death, was his friend's biographer for the Massachusetts Historical Society, of which they were both members. In these years of early manhood, too, Holmes made the acquaintance of Charles Sumner. The names of these illustrious Bostonians—Sumner, Howe, Phillips, and Motley—recall the noble society which it was then possible to find in that city, and also suggest some mention of the part taken by Dr. Holmes in the contest with slavery, where Phillips, Sumner, and Howe were so conspicuous.

Holmes wrote of Sumner as he saw him in 1836-'37: "He was an amiable, blameless young man; pleasant, affable, cheerful, with little imagination, wit, or sense of humor. Anything in the nature of a jest came very hard to him. He would look bewildered and almost distressed with the pleasantry that set a company laughing. I remember Park Benjamin said of him, in his rather extravagant way, that if one told Charles Sumner the moon was made of green cheese he would controvert the alleged fact, in all sincerity, and give good reason why it could not be so." This comment may help to explain why Dr.



Holmes was not at first an abolitionist, and why as the contest with slavery went on he separated more and more from Sumner, until they came together again in the years of civil war and forcible emancipation. Holmes was a man of wit, and in his youth lacked earnestness. He saw no reason to sacrifice his professional prospects in Boston, or make himself unpopular, by joining the abolitionists. He was at that time an epicurean, as Mr. Duyckinck said of him, by way of compliment, in 1855. He believed in the good things of this world, and had no ambition to be a martyr. It is to be feared, also, that he was a natural Tory—valuing himself on the good company he kept, and the felicity he enjoyed while walking what he calls

“The sunny street that holds the sifted few,”

by which we may know he means Beacon Street in Boston first, and then any other *lautæ carinæ* in other regions. Boston then abounded with these natural Tories, who, in the rough dialect of their radical opposites, were styled “Hunkers.” They made up the powerful class which controlled the market, the college, and the drawing-room; they opened or closed at will the avenues of preferment for young men of talent; they ignored Emerson, loathed Garrison, detested Parker, ridiculed Alcott and Margaret Fuller, tolerated Sumner and Phillips for a time on account of their talents, and then quietly sent them to Coventry. In this well-fed, well-bred minority, supported by a well-fed but ill-bred majority, Dr. Holmes was content to remain for years, scoffing at reformers now and then to please his audience, but chafing a little under the dull oppression of the popular theology, against which he finally revolted as completely as Theodore Parker had done before him. In his “Urania,” written in 1846, Dr. Holmes went so far as to denounce John Quincy Adams, by implication, as an enemy of the Union, while that “old man eloquent” was fighting the battle of freedom in Congress. The poet exclaimed:

“Chiefs of New England! by your sires’ renown  
Dash the red torches of the rebel down!



Flood his black hearthstone till its flames expire,  
*Though your old Sachem fanned his council fire."*

This "old Sachem" was Adams, and the "rebel" was the abolitionist, not the slaveholder, who turned out in fact to be so. Patriotism, always strong in Dr. Holmes, united with toryism to hold him on the "Hunker" side until toward the beginning of the Civil War, or, perhaps, no later than 1857, when the anti-slavery party definitely gained control of Massachusetts, reëlecting Sumner to the Senate almost unanimously. Indeed, in 1856, when Sumner was assaulted by the South Carolina bully, Dr. Holmes at a public dinner in Boston denounced the outrage as an assault upon the Union. And when the Civil War broke out none stood more firmly by the cause of the North than the laughing professor. He sent his oldest son to the fight, and saw him twice or thrice wounded, without shrinking from the sacrifice which his country demanded. This manly attitude, from which Dr. Holmes never receded, atoned, in the eyes even of his cousin Phillips, for the early antagonism to what few men then recognized as the sacred cause of civilization.

While living at Pittsfield in summer and at Boston in winter, Dr. Holmes became for a few years one of the most popular lyceum lecturers in the United States, and spent many weeks and months in the fatiguing work of lecturing from city to city, from town to town. Theodore Parker, who had more experience in this work, for ten years, than most Americans, wrote to a friend in Germany in 1857: "This business of lecturing is an original American contrivance for educating the people. The world has nothing like it. In it are combined the best things of the Church—i. e., the preaching, and of the College—i. e., the informing thought, with some of the fun of the Theatre. Besides, it gives the rural districts a chance to see the men they read about—to see the lions—for the lecture is also a show to the eyes. For ten years past, six or eight of the most powerful and progressive minds in America have been lecturing fifty or a hundred times in the year. Surely some must dance after so much piping, and

that of so moving a sort! But none knows the hardships of the lecturer's life. Some weeks since I went to Western New York, traveled from Monday morning till Saturday night, expected to have a reasonable dinner each day, to sleep quiet in my bed at night, and so come home sounder and stronger than I went away. I had two tolerable dinners, and one night in a bed—four nights in railroad cars. Hereafter I will limit my services to forty lectures in a winter." This was less than half his average number in each of the ten years preceding 1858, and in some of those years it is likely that Dr. Holmes lectured as often as Parker. He did not take the same high view of the lecturer's opportunity in America that Parker did when he "appointed himself a Home Missionary for Lectures," as he once said. On the contrary, Dr. Holmes at first viewed lecturing too much in its personal relation to himself, as poets and Bostonians are apt to look at all things. It increased his income, then not so large as he needed, but he was a little humiliated at the thought of going here and there on exhibition, like Shakespeare, the actor, who complained of Fortune when that guilty goddess

"Did not better for my life provide  
Than public means which public manners breeds."

"I have played the part of the 'Poor Gentleman' before a great many audiences," says the Autocrat; "more, I trust, than I shall ever face again. I did not wear a stage costume, nor a wig, nor mustaches of burnt cork; but I was placarded and announced as a public performer, and at the proper hour I came forward with the ballet-dancer's smile upon my countenance, and made my bow and acted my part. I have seen my name stuck up in letters so big that I was ashamed to show myself in the place by daylight. I have gone to a town with a sober literary essay in my pocket, and seen myself everywhere announced as the most desperate of *buffos*. I have been through as many hardships as Ulysses in the exercise of my histrionic vocation. I have sometimes felt as if I were a wandering spirit, and this great,

unchanging multivertebate which I faced night after night was one ever-listening animal, which writhed along after me wherever I fled, and coiled at my feet every evening, turning up to me the same sleepless eyes which I thought I had closed with my last drowsy incantation."

There is nothing, in this fastidious recollection, of that high spirit which led Parker to say: "I knew the power of a great idea, and, spite of the Market, the State, the Church, and the Press, I thought a few earnest men in the lecture halls of the North might yet incline the People's mind and heart to Justice and the Eternal Law of God, and so make the American experiment a triumph and a joy for all human kind." At that time Holmes could hardly be termed an "earnest man," and his view of the lecturer's mission, aside from the lucrative part of it, was better expressed by Mr. Duyckinck, in 1855, when he spoke of Holmes as "*latterly amusing himself* with the profitable variety of visiting the towns and cities of the Northern and Middle States in the delivery of lectures, of which he has a good working stock on hand. Thus he carries pleasure and refinement from the charmed *salons* of Beacon Street to towns and villages in the back districts, suddenly opened to light and civilization by the straight cut of the railroad." To be a missionary of Boston culture, rather than the apostle of political or theological revolution, must have pleased the anxious thought of this medical Brahmin. For Boston was then, and has ever since been to him, the chief city of the world. "That's all I claim for Boston," he makes one of his characters say, "that it is the thinking center of the continent, and, therefore, of the planet. Show me any other place that is, or was, since the megalosaurus has died out, where wealth and social influence are so fairly divided between the stationary and the progressive classes!" And in another vein the author says, later: "I never thought he would come to good when I heard him attempting to sneer at an unoffending city so respectable as Boston. Poor Edgar Poe died in the hospital soon after he got into this way of talking. Remember poor Edgar! He is dead and gone; but the State House has its cupola fresh gilded, and the Frog Pond has



got a fountain that squirts up a hundred feet into the air, and glorifies that humble street with a fine display of provincial rainbows."

Yet, in a certain sense, Dr. Holmes, who had idolized Boston and been idolized in turn, was the immediate successor of Theodore Parker, who denounced Boston—took Boston by the collar, as it were, marched it up to the mirror of history, and made it see its own painted face in that impartial glass. When Parker broke down in 1859, and left his pulpit and his lecture platform to wander in search of health and to die in Florence in 1860, Holmes had already begun, in the "*Atlantic Monthly*," those trenchant assaults on the old theology of New England which Parker was unable to continue. And Holmes did not fairly fasten upon himself the attention of the whole country until he appeared in this new character of a reformer. As a lecturer he had his day and passed by, his audience no longer craving the nuts and raisins of his wit, and the light *méringues* of his literary criticism. When the friends of good literature in Massachusetts, with Lowell for their cockswain, launched their new magazine, the "*Atlantic*," in 1857, Dr. Holmes was called on, and consented to take an active oar in the galley. Well did he perform his part, and without him the voyage might have come to an early end, in spite of Lowell's learning and wit, Emerson's poetic and philosophic insight, Longfellow's popular gift, and Whittier's moral muse. To the first seven volumes Holmes contributed fifty-four papers or poems, and to the first twenty volumes nearly a hundred; while Mr. Lowell himself contributed but sixty-eight pieces, mostly short literary notices, to the first seven volumes, and not more than a hundred to the first twenty volumes. This period covers that of Lowell's greatest literary productiveness, when he was writing the second series of "*Biglow Papers*"; and, while Lowell, since the twentieth volume, has contributed scarcely more than thirty pieces, Holmes has sent in about fifty. To the first twenty volumes Emerson contributed but twenty-six pieces, Longfellow thirty-one, Whittier forty-three, Whipple forty-three, and Higginson sixty-three. Mr. Howells, the late editor of the "*Atlantic*," who has written more articles for it than any one else, contributed to the first twenty vol-





BANKS OF THE HOUSATONIC, AT PITTSFIELD.



umes only forty-one papers and poems, chiefly short pieces, and Professor Norton less than forty pieces. It thus appears that, up to 1868, Dr. Holmes was the principal contributor to the "Atlantic," and it is also true that his contributions were more widely read than those of any other writer.

He became, in fact, a magazine lecturer, with a more serious purpose, and with a far larger audience, than he had ever commanded from the platform in Boston or elsewhere. Some of his "Atlantic" lectures took the form of "medicated novels" (as he reports that a witty Boston woman called them); others were essays or poems on scientific, literary, or personal themes, but mostly they were given in that disconnected manner of a talker at the table, which the title of his first successful series indicates. This title, "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," was one he had used in 1832, when contributing two papers to the "New England Magazine," of Boston, then edited by Joseph T. Buckingham, who afterward, as editor of the "Boston Courier," received and published Lowell's first series of "Biglow Papers." But the papers of 1832 were mere trifles, while the "Atlantic" essays, under the same name, were, from the first, worthy of note, though by no means so serious as they afterward became. From the first, however, they gave the author's autobiography, not without much repetition before the series was completed. In the first "Atlantic" "Autocrat" (November, 1857) we find this bit of Lucilian brag about the family images and traditions: "I go for the man with the family portraits, against the one with the twenty-five-cent daguerreotype, unless I find out that the last is the better of the two. I go for the man that inherits family traditions and the cumulative humanities of, at least, four or five generations. Above all things, as a child, he should have tumbled about in a library. All men are afraid of books that have not handled them from infancy. Do you suppose our dear Professor over there" (himself) "ever read 'Poli Synopsis,' or consulted 'Castelli Lexicon,' while he was growing up to their stature? Not he; but virtue passed through the hem of their parchment and leather garments whenever he touched them. I tell you he is at home where-



ever he smells the invigorating fragrance of Russia leather. *No self-made man feels so.*" This note of vainglory is heard at intervals through all the oracular utterances of the Autocrat, the Professor, and the Poet, and it has sometimes proved provoking, though as harmless as the egotism of Sumner, or the dyspeptic carping of Carlyle. Whatever Dr. Holmes has done is sure to have been well done, and he dwells upon his personal history microscopically, where Thoreau and Whitman would have done it telescopically. It was made a reproach against Thoreau by an elderly neighbor from Connecticut (where also Nature existed) that "Henry talked about Nature just as if she was born and brought up in Concord"; and so Holmes is always bringing things down to the horizon of his own experiences. Thus, after leaving his Montgomery Place abode, and taking another on the west side of old Boston, beside the river Charles, he dilates on his boating adventures, which he seems to have begun on the Housatonic before 1850, and which are first commemorated in his verses to "Governor Swain," one of the owners, after 1843, of the fair island of Naushon, in Gosnold's Bay, near New Bedford, where Dr. Holmes was sometimes a visitor, as of late years Mr. Emerson has often been. Writing to Mr. Swain, in 1851, Holmes says, if his skiff could venture out to sea, he would float down the Housatonic from Pittsfield to Long Island Sound, and thence eastward to Naushon.

"The mountain stream that loops and swerves  
Through my broad meadow's channeled curves  
Should waft me on, from bound to bound,  
To where the River weds the Sound;  
The Sound should give me to the Sea,  
That to the Bay, the Bay to thee."

Such a voyage he never attempted, but in 1858 he thus describes his exploits in one of his three boats on the Charles:

"In my own particular water-sulky, a 'shell' race-boat, twenty-two feet long, with huge outriggers, which boat I pull with ten-foot sculls—alone, of course, as it holds but one, and tips him out if he doesn't

mind what he is about—I glide around the Back Bay, down the stream, up the Charles to Cambridge and Watertown, up the Mystic, round the wharves, in the wake of steamboats, which have a swell after them, delightful to rock upon. I linger under the ‘caterpillar bridges’; rub against the black sides of old wood schooners; cool down under the overhanging stern of some tall Indiaman; stretch across to the Navy-yard, then strike out into the harbor, where the water gets clear, and the air smells of ocean; till all at once I remember that, if a west wind blows up of a sudden, I shall drift along past the islands, out of sight of the dear old State House. As I don’t want my wreck to be washed up on one of the beaches, I turn about and flap my long, narrow wings for home. Then back to my moorings at the foot of the Common, off with the rowing dress, dash under the green translucent wave, return to the garb of civilization, walk through my (Public) Garden, take a look at my elms on the Common, and, reaching my habitat, in consideration of my advanced period of life, indulge in the elysian abandonment of a huge recumbent chair.”

This is an interesting account of the amusements of an active professional and literary man at the age of forty-nine, but it concentrates the reader’s attention upon the author rather too much, and not, as do Hawthorne’s and Thoreau’s personal sketches, upon the scenery and events described. As compared with Walt Whitman’s personalities, too, these seem rather petty, though more refined and well-mannered. It is the Boston habit to fix attention closely on matters in themselves small and personal, even when larger spiritual considerations are directly involved; and Dr. Holmes furnishes an example of this as good as one could easily find.

Thus, along with these trifles of daily life, the Professor and the Poet, at their remarkable boarding-house table, take up the most solemn interests of the soul, and undertake to present a nobler view of man and his Maker than that which they found prevailing. In doing this, Dr. Holmes first began his long tilt against Jonathan Edwards and the doctrine of Total Depravity, insisting, however, that he found his own faith in one of the old Cambridge Puritan preachers. To prove this,

he quotes the quaint words of Jonathan Singletary, one of the witnesses in the Salem witchcraft delusion, who, when he had described what, no doubt, seemed to him supernatural noises, added: "I was at present something affrighted; yet, considering what I had lately heard made out by Mr. Mitchel at Cambridge—that there is more good in God than there is evil in sin, and that, although God is the greatest good, and sin the greatest evil, yet the first Being of evil can not weane the scales, or overpower the first Being of good; so, considering that the author of good was of greater power than the author of evil, God was pleased, of his goodness, to keep me from being out of measure frightened." And then Dr. Holmes says: "I shall always bless the memory of this poor timid creature for saving that dear remembrance of 'Matchless Mitchel.' I can see the little bare meeting-house, with the godly deacons, and the grave matrons, and the comely maidens, and the sober manhood of the village" (as Holmes had, indeed, seen them in his boyhood), "with the small group of college students sitting by themselves under the shadow of the awful Presidential Presence, all listening to that preaching which was, as Cotton Mather says, 'as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice'; and as the holy pastor utters those blessed words, which are not of any church or age, but of all time, the humble place of worship is filled with their perfume, as the house where Mary knelt was filled with the odor of the precious ointment." This passage well represents the best side of Dr. Holmes's divinity; but at times he has been more controversial and irritating to the old-fashioned orthodox, who have not failed to attack him in their turn. In course of time this has brought him so far from his old conservative ground that, when he read, not long since, his paper on Jonathan Edwards, lately printed in the "North American Review," it was in presence of the Boston "radicals," who gather in Mrs. Sargent's drawing-room in Chestnut Street.

Of late years Dr. Holmes has removed from his Charles Street house, where Governor Andrew and James T. Fields were his neighbors, to a house on that western extension of Beacon Street known as "The Mill-dam." There he lives, surrounded with his books, still



writing poems and essays, and sparkling letters; and from there in the winter season he still goes forth to lecture before the medical students of Harvard University, four or five times a week, as he has done for more than thirty years. His medical lectures and occasional professional writings would alone have given him a literary reputation, so clear and learned, so witty and suggestive, have they been. He has passed the age of threescore and ten, and, in his last volume of poems, celebrates himself as an old man; but, like Anacreon, he yet has much of the fire of youth in him, and will continue to write, as we hope, for many years to come. He is of small stature, like his father, the Cambridge parson, and, like him, quick and electrical in his movements and gesture. Though now wearing white hair, and using glasses, he still recalls the picture made of him by one who heard him in 1836 read his first long poem in the college church at Cambridge. "Extremely youthful in his appearance, bubbling over with the mingled humor and pathos that have always marked his poetry, and sparkling with the coruscations of his peculiar genius, he delivered the poem with a clear, ringing enunciation, which imparted to the hearers his own enjoyment of his thoughts and expressions." It is in this manner that he has been delighting two generations of his friends, without losing his own pleasure while conferring so much on others. By the calendar he must be reckoned old, but hardly otherwise, since to him his graceful couplet well applies:

"For him in vain the envious seasons roll  
Who bears eternal summer in his soul."



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There came a youth upon the earth  
Some thousand years ago,  
Whose slender hands were nothing worth  
Whether to plough or reap or sow.

J. K. Lowell







"ELMWOOD," RESIDENCE OF JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

## JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

IN 1843 Hawthorne, then an almost unknown author; though he had published the "Twice-Told Tales," wrote for his young friend Lowell a new piece—"The Hall of Fantasy"—in the second number of "The Pioneer," a three months' magazine, edited in Boston by

James Russell Lowell and Robert Carter. In this sketch Hawthorne describes himself as visiting "a spacious hall with a pavement of white marble, and a lofty dome, supported by long rows of pillars of fantastic architecture," in which he meets poets and romancers, men of imagination and of wit, his own contemporaries, as they then appeared to him—Bryant, Percival, Dana, Halleck, Willis, Charles Sprague, Pierpont, Longfellow, Irving, Cooper, Miss Sedgwick, Dr. Holmes, and others. "In the midst of these lights of the age," said Hawthorne, "it gladdened me to greet my old friends of Brook Farm, with whom, though a recreant now, I had borne the heat of many a summer's day, while we labored together toward the perfect life. Mr. Emerson was likewise there, leaning against one of the pillars, and surrounded by an admiring crowd of writers and readers of "The Dial," and all manner of Transcendentalists and disciples of the Newness, most of whom betrayed the power of his intellect by its modifying influence upon their own. He had come into the hall, I suppose, in search either of a fact or a real man. In the same part of the hall Jones Very stood alone, within a circle which no other of mortal race could enter, nor himself escape from. Here also was Mr. Alcott; and there was no man in the enchanted hall whose mere presence, the language of whose look and manner, wrought such an impression as that of this great mystic innovator. So calm and gentle was he, so holy in aspect, so quiet in the utterance of what his soul brooded upon, that one might readily conceive his Orphic Sayings to well upward from a fountain in his breast which communicated with the infinite abyss of Thought. There was Washington Allston, who possesses the freedom of the hall by the threefold claim of painter, novelist, and poet; and John Neal, whose rampant muse belches wild fire, with huge volumes of smoke; *and Lowell, the poet of the generation that now enters upon the stage.*"

This passage (omitted by the author in his "Mosses," and which Mr. Julian Hawthorne has, perhaps, forgotten in his father's writings, as most readers have) gives at a glimpse the company in which the young Lowell found himself when he began to make a name among his countrymen in literature and in thought. He was associated with



the idealists, the romantic and mystical and liberty-loving writers and speakers, who kept alive the light of freedom and culture at a period of our national history when both seemed in danger of extinction. At that time he was not only intimate with Emerson and Alcott, but with the despised and hated abolitionists, headed by Garrison and Phillips. In the same number of "*The Pioneer*," and, apparently, from Lowell's own pen, we find a tribute to his anti-slavery associates and leaders: "William Lloyd Garrison, the half-inspired Luther of this reform, a man too remarkable to be appreciated in his generation, but whom the future will recognize as a great and wonderful spirit; Whittier, the fiery Koerner of this spiritual warfare; and the tenderly-loving Maria Child, the author of that dear book '*Philothea*'—a woman of genius who lives with humble content in the intellectual Coventry to which her conscientiousness has banished her—a fate the hardest for genius to bear."

During his apprenticeship to literature Lowell found himself also in this "intellectual Coventry," but it was no banishment to him, for in it he found the sweetest companionship and the noblest inspiration. It was among the gifted, brilliant, and lovely young abolitionists of Boston and its suburbs that his own genius was called forth; his Coventry had its Lady Godiva, also, to love whom, as Steele said of Lady Elizabeth Hastings, "was a liberal education." A noble cause and an absorbing love engaged Lowell at the same time, and it was through his devotion to Maria White, quite as much as from ancestral inheritance or early education, that he ranked himself, at opening manhood, among the New England reformers. His grandfather, Judge Lowell, had inserted in the Massachusetts "Bill of Rights," in 1780, the Jeffersonian clause that "all men are born free and equal," for the purpose, as he then avowed, of abolishing slavery in Massachusetts; and he offered his services as a lawyer, through the newspapers, after the State Constitution was adopted, to any slave who desired under that clause to claim his liberty. The poet's father, Dr. Charles Lowell, who was born in Boston, in 1782, was but a year old when the Massachusetts Supreme Court decided Judge Lowell's position in favor of

freedom to be constitutional, and, since 1783, slavery has had no legal existence in Massachusetts, thanks to the name of Lowell. Francis Cabot Lowell, an uncle of the poet, who died in 1817, was one of the founders of the cotton manufacture in Massachusetts; and it is from him that the city of Lowell takes its name. John Lowell, first cousin of the poet, but born twenty years before him, was the founder of the Lowell Institute, in Boston—an endowment by which free courses of lectures on religion, science, literature, and art have been maintained in that city for more than forty years.

Connected with such a family, James Russell Lowell began life, not only with tendencies in the right direction, but with advantages that materially aided him in the pursuits of his after-life. His father, Rev. Charles Lowell, was a minister in Boston from 1806 till 1861, when he died, but during the greater portion of his long pastorate his home was at Cambridge, in the old Tory mansion-house now called "Elmwood," where his son the poet was born, February 22, 1819. This house, with its grounds, has been described by Lowell, as so many of his Cambridge haunts have been; it is still his home, when he is not residing abroad, as at present; and it is one of the few American houses in which a distinguished man has been born and spent his whole life. Mr. Longfellow, his neighbor, lives in another of the old Cambridge Tory houses—but he was not born there. Dr. Lowell had occupied Elmwood but a year or two when his youngest son, James Russell Lowell, was born. Its last owner had been Elbridge Gerry, a Vice-President of the United States, Governor of Massachusetts, and signer of the Declaration of Independence; but the house was built before the Revolution, for a very different sort of magnate—Thomas Oliver, the Tory lieutenant-governor of Massachusetts, who was driven out of it by a patriotic mob in September, 1774, since when there have been no royal lieutenant-governors in Massachusetts. It is a three-story, square, wooden house, plainly built, but with spacious grounds, on which are stately pines and the elms that gave it a name, and the barn and outbuildings which the Tory magnate used more than a century ago. The grounds in front are laid out in some semblance

of a garden, but in the rear they are tangled and wild, and not far off is the rural cemetery of Boston—Mount Auburn—in which the poet's children and kinsmen are buried.

“ I thought of a mound in sweet Auburn,  
Where a little headstone stood ;  
How the flakes were folding it gently,  
As did robins the babes in the wood.”

The poet's study was formerly a west chamber in the third story, from whose southern windows a wide view includes Boston and its suburbs, with the river Charles in the foreground, creeping among its broad meadows ; while below are the trees and the birds which Lowell celebrates in his poem, “ Under the Willows ”—

“ The sliding Charles,  
Blue toward the west, and bluer and more blue,  
Living and lustrous as a woman's eyes  
Look once and look no more ; with southward curve  
Ran crinkling sunniness, like Helen's hair  
Glimpsed in Elysium, in substantial gold.  
From blossom-clouded orchards, far away,  
The bobolink tinkled ; the deep meadows flowed  
With multitudinous pulse of light and shade  
Against the bases of the southern hills ;  
While here and there a drowsy island rick  
Slept, and its shadow slept ; the wooden bridge  
Thundered, and then was silent ; on the roof  
The sun-warped shingles rippled with the heat.”

Amid scenery like this, described also in the glowing and liquid rhymes of “ Sir Launfal,” Russell Lowell grew up, through childhood and youth, in an old house full of old pictures and furniture, old and new books, and in a town where the old and new were strangely blent together. The familiar name of this town is “ Old Cambridge,” ostensibly to distinguish the village where the colleges stood from Cambridgeport, East Cambridge, North and West Cambridge—all which



were formerly parts of the ancient Massachusetts town of Cambridge—but really to mark by a single word the traditional air and manner of the place. In his “Indian Summer Reverie,” and again in the prose of “Fireside Travels,” Lowell has drawn the picture of the quiet, half rural town, now transformed into a city of fifty thousand inhabitants,



THE CHARLES RIVER.

where the poet had his birth, breeding, college life, wooing, and domestic happiness; where he won his fame, too, and wrote all those books by which posterity will remember him.

“ There gleams my native village, dear to me,  
Though higher change’s waves each day are seen,  
Whelming fields famed in boyhood’s history,  
Sanding with houses the diminished green;

There, in red brick, which softening time defies,  
 Stand square and stiff the Muse's factories ;  
 How with my life knit up is every well-known scene !

“ Flow on, dear river ! not alone you flow  
 To outward sight and through your marshes wind ;  
 Fed from the mystic springs of long ago,  
 Your twin flows silent through my world of mind ;  
 Grow dim, dear marshes, in the evening's gray !  
 Before my inner sight ye stretch away,  
 And will for ever, though these fleshly eyes grow blind.

“ Beyond the hillock's house-bespotted swell,  
 Where Gothic chapels house the horse and chaise,  
 Where quiet cits in Grecian temples dwell,  
 Where Coptic tombs resound with prayer and praise,  
*Where dust and mud the equal year divide,*  
 There gentle Allston lived, and wrought, and died.”

These gibes at the wooden architecture scattered over Dana Hill, on the way from Mount Auburn to the Port, will be understood by all who remember Cambridge as it was before the Civil War, and still better by those whose memory reaches back to the days of Sales, Popkin, Waterhouse, and Dr. Kirkland, the college dignitaries portrayed by Lowell in those incomplete chapters addressed to Story, the artist, which he calls “ Fireside Travels.” The poet's classmate and intimate friend, William Story (son of the great judge of that name, who lived and died in Cambridge), is there addressed as “ Edelmann Storg,” recalling the blunder of some German who had seen the name written, and had stumbled over both the title and the surname. In these chapters, Lowell says, speaking of Cambridge at his earliest recollection :

“ Boston was not yet a city ” (it became one in 1823, when Lowell was four years old), “ and Cambridge was still a country village ” (of 3,300 inhabitants in 1820), “ with its own habits and traditions, not yet feeling too strongly the force of suburban gravitation. Approach-



ing it from the west, by what was then called the New Road" (perhaps the Concord Turnpike), "you would pause on the brow of Symond's Hill to enjoy a view singularly soothing and placid. In front of you lay the town, tufted with elms, lindens, and horse-chestnuts, which had seen Massachusetts a colony, and were fortunately unable to emigrate with the Tories, by whom, or by whose fathers, they were planted. Over it rose the noisy belfry of the College, the square brown tower of the (Episcopal) Church, and the slim yellow



SALT MEADOWS ON THE CHARLES.

spire of the parish meeting-house. On your right the Charles slipped smoothly through green and purple salt meadows, darkened here and there with the blossoming black-grass as with a stranded cloud-shadow. To your left hand, upon the Old Road" (now Mount Auburn Street), "you saw some half-dozen dignified old houses of the colonial time, all comfortably fronting southward. . . . We called it 'the Village' then, and it was essentially an English village—quiet, unspeculative, without enterprise, sufficing to itself, and only showing such differences from



the original type as the public school and the system of town government might superinduce. A few houses, chiefly old, stood around the bare Common, with ample elbow-room, and old women, capped and spectacled, still peered through the same windows from which they had watched Lord Percy's artillery rumble by to Lexington, or caught a glimpse of the handsome Virginia general who had come to wield our homespun Saxon chivalry. The hooks were to be seen from which had swung the hammocks of Burgoyne's captive red-coats. If memory does not deceive me, women still washed clothes in the town spring, clear as that of Bandusia. One coach sufficed for all the travel to the metropolis. Commencement had not ceased to be the great holiday of the Boston Commonwealth, and a fitting one it was. The students (scholars they were called then) wore their sober uniform, not ostentatiously distinctive, or capable of rousing democratic envy; and the old lines of caste were blurred rather than rubbed out, as servitor was softened into beneficiary. Was it possible for us in those days to conceive of a greater potentate than the president of the University, in his square doctor's cap, that still filially recalled Oxford and Cambridge? Dr. Kirkland was president then—a man of genius, but of genius that evaded utilization—a great water-power, but without rapids, and flowing with too smooth and gentle a current to be set turning wheels and whirling spindles. Shall I take Brahmin Alcott's favorite word, and call him a demonic man? No, the Latin *genius* is quite old-fashioned enough for me." And so Lowell goes prattling on about Dr. Kirkland and Dr. Popkin, and the long-buried magnates of Harvard College, whose ranks he was to join in after years.

But it was as a boy that he looked upon Dr. Kirkland, who was dead, and had been succeeded in the presidency by old Quincy, the father of Lowell's friend, Edmund Quincy, before Lowell himself entered college in 1834. Dr. Kirkland had married, late in life, a daughter of George Cabot, the social leader of the Boston Federalists in the days of Hamilton and Jefferson; and Dr. Charles Lowell's brothers and cousins were also Boston Federalists, and belonged to the same social circle with Cabot and Kirkland. The Lowells, like the Quincys, the

Danas, and the Winthrops, might lay claim to the distinction of having been gentlefolk ever since the settlement of the Massachusetts colony; and this perception of caste, and some pride of birth, must be recognized among the early and later traits of Lowell the poet. His father was a gentle clergyman, bred to the law, like his ancestors, but turning to the ministry by a natural attraction for what was spiritual and lovely. He married Miss Harriet Spence, of New Hampshire, a gentlewoman of Scotch descent, who taught her children early the melodies of Scotland, and trained the ear of her youngest son to that love of poetry which so soon appeared in him. Russell Lowell (as he was commonly called) entered college before he was sixteen, and when he graduated, in 1838, at the age of nineteen, he was already ranked as a poet by his classmates and by himself. He was, in fact, the titular class poet of his graduating year, and wrote for his "class day" a poem of some length, which he was not permitted to read on that occasion, being then under college punishment, but which he printed not long after. It was the first of his verse which found its way into print, unless he wrote verses, as perhaps he did, for the college magazine, "*Harvardiana*," of which he was an editor in 1837-'38. He was also secretary of the Hasty-Pudding Club in his junior year, and in that capacity, according to the rules of the club, kept his records in verse; but none of these have ever been printed, or, in fact, deserve printing. His class poem has little merit for its verse or its sentiment, but is curious as throwing light on the "environment" of Lowell at that time, and for the strong contrast it presents to the opinions and purposes of its author a year or two after it was written. In college he was far from studious, and was inclined to be gay among his gay comrades; for which he was "suspended" in his senior year, and sent up to "rusticate" in Concord, fifteen miles inland from Cambridge, under the tutorship of the Rev. Barzillai Frost, the parish minister of Concord at that time. His class poem was, in fact, written at Concord, and its preface is dated there in August, 1838; so that the citizens of that town may claim Lowell as one of the "Concord Authors," along with Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Channing, Alcott,

George Curtis, Julian Hawthorne, and the other literary men who have lived at Concord some portion of their days.

When the young collegian went to spend his summer in Concord in 1838, the Transcendental springtime had fairly opened there. Emerson had published his "Nature" a year or two earlier, and Bronson Alcott had begun those visits to his friend which ended in his own migration to Concord in 1840. Ellery Channing followed him in 1841, and Hawthorne in 1842. Thoreau was born in Concord (which, he said, "is my Rome"), and was living there when Lowell came; but they saw little of each other then or afterward. It was not till the first hegira from Brook Farm that George Curtis and his brother, two graceful Arcadians, came to herd cattle and play the flute along the meadows of the Assabet and the Musketaquid. It certainly seemed for some years as if the saying of Alcott was to be fulfilled, wherein he wrote: "I think wise men and excellent women have no right to live elsewhere for the next half-century." Margaret Fuller and Elizabeth Peabody came and went, as Miss Mary Emerson had done for sixty years before them; Mrs. Sarah Ripley now and then visited in Concord, and came there to abide in 1847; while Miss Elizabeth Hoar, like Thoreau, was always at home in the town. Lowell's boarding place, when he was not living in the family of Parson Frost, was next door to Squire Hoar's, the father of Elizabeth Hoar, of the Senator and the Judge of that name. At the other end of the village, half a mile eastward, on the Lexington road, stood the house of Emerson; and half a mile northward, across the winding river and the meadows, rose the brown wall and mossy gambrel roof of the Old Manse, not yet immortalized by Hawthorne's pen. It does not appear that Lowell took note of the philosophy or literature of Concord then, except to scoff at it. Of his own poem he said: "Many of my readers, and all my friends, know that it was not by any desire of mine that this rather slim production is printed. Circumstances, known to all my readers, and which I need not dilate on here, considerably cooled my interest in the performance. . . . There are a few grains of gold, or, at least, tinsel, in the composition, but the lead—oh! word infaust to poets—will,



I fear, far outweigh them." This preface is dated "Concord, Massachusetts, August, 1838"; and at the end of the poem, among the notes, Lowell says: "Speaking of Concord, having spent most of my vacation in that town, I can recommend it as a residence for any student whose precarious state of health requires a change of air. Though the situation is low, the air is salubrious. The inhabitants (to whom I return my heartfelt thanks for their kind attention to a stranger) are hospitable and pleasant. Moreover, I can bestow the still higher commendation on them, that (which is rare in country towns) they mind their own business wonderfully. P. S.—I have been informed that this last is only at *one end* of the town." The tradition is that Lowell was then a lively youth, who joined in the amusements of the young people and visited at the houses of their elders—at Mr. Emerson's particularly, which was always open to young men of talent. It was then that the acquaintance was formed between Emerson and Lowell, which has continued unbroken to this day—the elder poet generously overlooking in the younger those sallies of wit and follies of youth which Lowell himself soon saw occasion to regret. The class poem contained some of these impertinences, as will appear by a few quotations.

This poem is, in the main, an attack upon Carlyle, Emerson, the New England abolitionists, the friends of woman's rights, the Transcendentalists, and, in short, most of the persons and classes with whom, a few years after, Lowell identified himself. Carlyle's "*Sartor Resartus*" had lately been reprinted in Boston, and against that book Lowell directed his invective, with a glance in passing at Emerson, who had introduced Carlyle to American readers. Thus he writes:

"Alas for poor Philosophy ! that she  
 In her old age should come to beggary,  
 And turn a tailoress, who from her throne  
 Once ruled fair Greece, and called the world her own.  
 Those days are gone when poet, hero, sage,  
 In rapture brooded o'er her speaking page ;  
 Those days are gone, and now her only friends  
 Are misty rhapsodists whom Heaven sends

To form a contrast with the blessed light,  
And make Truth's holy luster seem more bright.  
Who, blessed with souls scarce larger than a broker's,  
Would furnish them to pots and pans and pokers,  
And, having made a 'universal soul,'  
Forget their own in thinking of the whole.

Woe for Religion, too, when men who claim  
To place a 'Reverend' before their name  
Ascend the Lord's own holy place to preach  
In strains that Kneeland had been proud to reach,  
And which, if measured by Judge Thacher's scale,  
Had doomed their author to the county jail!  
Alas! that *Christian ministers* should dare  
To preach the views of Gibbon and Voltaire.  
Alas! that one whose life and gentle ways,  
E'en hate could find it in its heart to praise,  
Whose intellect is equaled but by few,  
Should strive for what he'd weep to find were true."

The allusion here is to Mr. Emerson himself, who at that time was still known as "the Reverend Ralph Waldo Emerson," and who occasionally preached in 1838, at Lexington and elsewhere, if called upon to fill the pulpit of some "advanced" church, or to give a labor of love to some friend in the ministry, from the labors of which calling Mr. Emerson had withdrawn four or five years earlier. The "Kneeland" referred to was Abner Kneeland, once a minister, who had become the editor of a deistical paper in Boston, the "Investigator," and had been punished by Judge Thacher for blasphemy. Elsewhere in the poem Lowell compassionates the sad fate of the American Indians—the Cherokees and Seminoles were the Poncas of 1838—and compliments Emerson for his letter to President Van Buren on behalf of the Indians, written in 1837. As this letter is now wholly unknown, it may be well to print a few passages from it which I copy from the scrap-books of Helen and Sophia Thoreau, the sisters of Henry Thoreau. The letter was printed at the time in the "Concord Freeman," or the "Yeoman's Gazette," from which one of the Thoreaus transferred it to her scrap-

book. It is addressed to Martin Van Buren, then President, and is dated "Concord, 23 April, 1838." Here are some passages, not always following in the same connection that they have in the letter itself. To Van Buren Mr. Emerson says: "The seat you fill places you in a relation of credit and dearness to every citizen. By right and natural position, every citizen is your friend. Each has the highest right to call your attention to such subjects as are of a public nature, and properly belong to the Chief Magistrate, and the good magistrate will feel a joy in meeting such confidence. In this belief, and at the instance of a few of my friends and neighbors, I crave of your patience a short hearing for their sentiments and my own; and the circumstance *that my name will be utterly unknown to you* will only give the fairer chance to your equitable construction of what I have to say." He then goes on to state the Cherokee question as it then existed, and, at the close of the letter, says: "A man with your experience in affairs must have seen cause to appreciate the futility of opposition to the moral sentiment. However feeble the sufferer, and however great the oppressor, it is in the nature of things that the blow should recoil on the aggressor. For God is in the sentiment, and it can not be withstood. The potentate and the people perish before it; but with it, and as its executors, they are omnipotent."

This letter of Emerson's, which he has never reprinted, will generally be thought one of the least important of his papers. But to Lowell it was saying the right thing at the right time, and he praised it accordingly in the class day poem, which could tolerate neither abolitionists nor speculative philosophers. Thus, for instance, while dilating on the wrongs done to the Cherokees and Seminoles, he proceeds by way of antithesis, speaking to the abolitionists:

"Bold saints! why tell us here of those who scoff  
At law and reason thousands of miles off?  
Why punish us with your infernal din  
For what you tell us is the planter's sin?  
Why on the North commence the fierce crusade,  
And war on them for ills the South has made?  
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Can ye not hear where on the Southern breeze  
Swells the last wailing of the Cherokees ?  
Hark ! the last Indian sighs a last adieu  
To scenes which memory gilds with brighter hue," etc.

Already, however, the young student begins to think and feel in a more serious strain. At the end of the poem, and bearing date, "Concord, August 21, 1838," we find this dedication to her, as we suppose, who afterward became his inspiration, and enlisted him in the causes at which he had scoffed :

" Lady ! whom I have dared to call my muse,  
With thee my lay began, with thee shall end—  
Thou can'st not such a poor request refuse  
To let thine image with its closing blend !  
As turn the flowers to the quiet dew,  
Fairest, so turns my yearning heart to thee,  
For thee it pineth, as the homesick shell  
Mourns to be once again beneath the sea—  
Oh ! let thine eyes upon this tribute dwell,  
And think—one moment—kindly think of me !  
Alone—my spirit seeks thy company,  
And in all beautiful communes with thine,  
In crowds—it ever seeks alone to be,  
To dream of gazing in thy gentle eyne !"

This is almost the only passage in the class poem worth remembering, and this less for what it says than for the long vista it opens into the future life of the poet. When he appeared again before the world with a volume of verse, it was as the lover of the woman of heart and genius whom he married a few years later, and whose death in 1853 was the keenest sorrow that ever came, or ever can come, to the poet. "A Year's Life," which Lowell published in 1841, a year and a half after his college graduation, has never been republished, and of its seventy poems he has reprinted scarcely more than a sixth part in the later collections of his verses. There is some reason in this exclusion, for many of these early poems do not satisfy the stricter requirements

of advancing years, but the happy and glowing life which they exhibit atones for many defects. This spirit of joy and youth shines out everywhere in "A Year's Life," and is calmly worded in the proem, which has seldom been quoted, though some of the verses that follow are as popular as any that Lowell has written. We shall name it

#### THE TRINITY.

" Hope first the youthful Poet leads,  
And he is glad to follow her ;  
Kind is she, and to all his needs  
With a free hand doth minister.

" But when sweet Hope at last hath fled,  
Cometh her sister Memory ;  
She wreathes Hope's garlands round her head,  
And strives to seem as fair as she.

" Then Hope comes back, and by the hand  
She leads a child most fair to see,  
Who with a joyous face doth stand,  
Uniting Hope and Memory.

" So brighter grew the earth around  
And bluer grew the sky above ;  
*The Poet now his guide hath found,  
And follows in the steps of Love."*

This last assertion must be taken more literally in Lowell's case than the protestations of most lovers and poets ; for he did, indeed, "follow in the steps of love," year after year ; and he had found his guide in more senses than one. The lady to whom he gave so much affection, and who was worthy of it, used to say : " James falls in love with me every day anew," and, indeed, the tie between them was no common one. It was recognized by all their friends as the most natural and yet romantic affection, concerning which there was less need of reserve and privacy than in most engagements, so that this ardent volume, "A

Year's Life," was regarded as an open love-letter which the initiated might read. And the hopes, the aspirations, the purposes of Maria White were all noble and open; she joyfully ranged herself and drew her friends on the side of public causes, like the abolition of slavery, the elevation of the poor, the enfranchisement of women, the reformation of outgrown customs and laws, such as those which enacted the penalty of death. Those who had the felicity to know her have said that in such generous causes she was irresistible, not so much by what she said, although she had the gifts of melodious speech and high intelligence, but by the charm which inspires sympathy with all that is excellent, when we see it in living form before us. She was herself the goodness that she advocated, and which no longer needed an advocate with those who saw and listened to her. It is hard to estimate the influence which a person so noble, loving, and beloved, naturally exerts on those who come within the sphere of her attraction. "I was born in a country," said Sir Robert Wilson, when tempted to betray the secret of Lavalette's escape from prison, "where the social virtues are regarded as public virtues, and I have never trained my memory to a breach of friendship." In a still higher sense are the *social* virtues of women like Maria Lowell *public* virtues, and it would be treason to memory and to friendship not to proclaim how important was the influence of such women in the great struggle between slavery and freedom in America. To such women the emancipation of our slaves, and the rescue of our country from a hideous form of democratic oligarchy, was fairly due; and among them Maria Lowell holds a high place, though her own personal activity was so limited and ceased so early. To her we owe the constant, timely, and effective support which the poet of the younger generation of New England gave to the anti-slavery cause when it needed all the aid that genius and social culture could bring it. She was the center of a circle of young persons who devoted themselves as sincerely to the good of humanity as most persons of their station and surroundings do to pleasure and society; their pleasure and their society were for the good of others. The native traits of Lowell would hardly have made him,



as he was for years, a leader in this circle, but hand in hand with his betrothed he went forward in this chorus of youths and maidens until they became a part of the high national tragedy just coming forward on our American theatre. Then followed the strophe and antistrophe, the satirical play in which Hosea Biglow was the masked actor, and finally the shock of war itself. Long before that event the lovely leader in this procession had vanished, the band of friends was broken, the lover had become the husband and father, had been twice and thrice bereaved, and was to endure other wounds from which the heart bleeds long and never wholly heals itself. But the work of life had been done, the training of the poet had been completed, and he who had joined in the contest when success seemed impossible, now, in his Commemoration Ode, sung the victory achieved. The period of one-and-twenty years between the publication of Lowell's first anti-slavery verses in 1844 and his recital of the Commemoration Ode in July, 1865, just after the death of Abraham Lincoln, was the very crisis that he had sung, and for which his year of betrothal had prepared him. He was married in December, 1844, just before the annexation of Texas, against which the anti-slavery men of all parties had contended, and which precipitated the final struggle between the North and the South. From that time onward, as for four or five years earlier, James Russell Lowell and Maria White were among the most radical of the abolitionists—the friends and followers of Garrison, Phillips, Maria Weston Chapman, Mrs. Child, Ellis Gray Loring, Francis Jackson, Edmund Quincy, and the other extreme emancipationists. They were contributors to the "Liberty Bell," the anti-slavery annual, and Lowell, like his intimate friend Quincy, was also a frequent contributor to the "Anti-Slavery Standard," the organ of the abolitionists in New York. It was in this journal, rather than in the more famous "Liberator," that Lowell's poems appeared oftenest, from 1843 to 1846; after which, for a time, he wrote for the Boston "Courier," then edited by Joseph T. Buckingham. The "Courier" published the first series of the "Biglow Papers," beginning in June, 1846, and ending in 1848, while in the autumn of the last-named year

the "Fable for Critics" appeared, and gave Lowell his first distinctly literary success. In 1844 he had published a volume of poems, opening with his "Legend of Brittany," and in 1843, in conjunction with Robert Carter, a journalist of rare learning, he had made his first venture in magazine editing by commencing "The Pioneer," from which passages have already been cited, but which few persons of the present generation have ever seen. It continued but for three months—January, February, and March, 1843—a double-columned magazine of forty-eight pages, "with engravings of the highest character, both on wood and steel," and with contributions from Poe, Hawthorne, John Neal, John S. Dwight, Dr. Parsons, Jones Very, Miss Barrett (soon to be Mrs. Browning, who sent over from London a poem called "The Maiden's Death"), Whittier, William W. Story, Maria White, and Lowell himself. The latter concealed the authorship of certain pieces under various disguises. Thus Lowell's beautiful love-song beginning:

" O moonlight ! deep and tender,  
A year and more of one,  
Your mist of golden splendor  
On my betrothal shone ! "

was printed in the "Pioneer," but ascribed to "Henry Peters." Two sonnets, which seem to be Maria White's, and, if so, are addressed to Lowell, are signed "V." In these we find lines which, if they did not imply Lowell, might well have done so, and which are worthy of his betrothed:

" I love thee—not because thy love for me,  
Like a great sunrise, did o'ervault my day  
With purple light, and wrought upon my way  
The morning dew in fresh emblazonry.  
The truth that in thine eyes holds starry throne,  
And coins the words that issue from thy lips,  
Heroic courage that meets no eclipse,  
And humbler virtues on thy pathway strewn—

These love I so, that if they swift uprise  
 To sure fulfillment in more perfect spheres,  
 Still will I listen underneath the skies  
 For thy new song, with seldom dropping tears ;  
 And midst my daily tasks of love will wait  
 The angel Death—guardian of Heaven's gate."

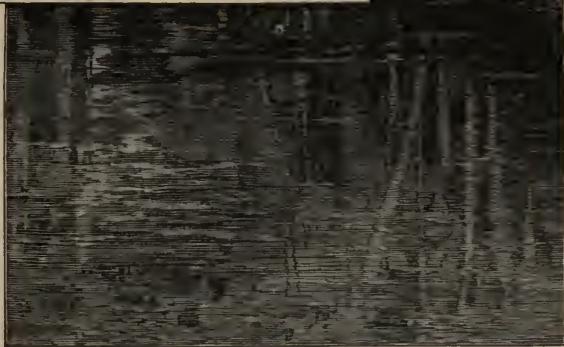
At the close of the third number of the "Pioneer" Mr. Carter inserted this note, after which the magazine passed into oblivion. "The absence of any prose in the present number from the pen of Mr. Lowell, and the apparent neglect of many letters and contributions addressed to him personally, will be sufficiently explained by stating that, since the 10th of January, 1843, he has been in the city of New York in attendance upon Dr. Eliot, the distinguished oculist, who is endeavoring to cure him of a severe disease of the eyes ; and that the medical treatment to which he is necessarily subjected precludes the use of his sight, except to a very limited extent. He will, however, probably be enabled, in time for the fourth number, to resume his essays on the poets and dramatists, and his general supervision of the magazine." The "Pioneer" died, presumably from lack of subscribers, but the essays went on, and were published in 1844-'45 under the name of "Conversations on the Poets." This was Lowell's first critical work of any moment, and it contains the germ of those lectures on English literature which he gave at the Lowell Institute in Boston in 1854-'55, and which, in turn, became the nucleus of his brilliant university lectures on literature at Cambridge, from 1857 onward. In 1844 he contributed to Emerson's "Dial," and to the "Democratic Review," for which also Hawthorne and Thoreau wrote ; in 1847-'49 he wrote for the "Massachusetts Quarterly Review," in which he noticed Thoreau's first volume when it came out in 1849 ; and in 1853, and for several years after, he wrote much for "Putnam's Monthly" in New York. In 1849 his poems were collected in two volumes, while the first series of the "Biglow Papers" was published in a volume in 1848, and soon after his romantic poem, "The Vision of Sir Launfal," which is the most popular of his serious poems.



During this season of literary and political activity, Mr. Lowell lived in social retirement at Elmwood with his wife, his father, and oth-



er kinsfolk, and his few intimate friends about him. His children died in infancy, all save one daughter, Mabel, now the wife of Mr. Edward Burnett, of Southborough; but except



*"... The brink of some wood-nestled lakelet."*

"THE BIRCH-TREE."

this bereavement, and the ill fortunes of the country in its political degradation, he had little occasion for sorrow, and passed a life of quiet felicity, in pursuits most congenial to his nature, which loved learning, but also ease and leisure. He had studied law after leaving college, and even went so far as to open an office in Boston; but he had fewer clients than Charles Sumner, and soon gave up all desire for them. He inherited a modest competence, and his wife, the daughter of a wealthy citizen in Watertown, a mile or two from Elmwood, was also independent in fortune. They lived simply and hospitably, traveling but little, dining once a week with Mrs. White at Watertown, amid the "elm trees dark and dewy" and the orchard shadows of the garden where he had wooed his bride. They were the center of a cultivated circle in Cambridge, yet apart from the University, which in those years was unfriendly to abolitionists and reformers of all sorts. Longfellow was his neighbor, and so was John Holmes, brother of the poet, and Dr. Estes Howe, a leader among the voting anti-slavery men of Massachusetts, who had married a sister of Maria White. When Lowell said, in 1848,

"I can walk with the Doctor, get facts from the Don,  
Or draw out the Lambish quintessence of John,"

he meant Dr. Howe, Robert Carter, and John Holmes, who were then his daily companions. Not far off in Cambridge lived his sister-in-law, Mrs. Anna Lowell, a noble woman, the mother of his two nephews, Charles and James, whose death in the Civil War he commemorated so pathetically in the second series of "Biglow Papers":

"Rat-tat-tat-tattle thru the street  
I hear the drummers makin' riot,  
An' I set thinkin' o' the feet  
That follered once and now are quiet—  
White feet, ez snowdrops innocent,  
That never knowed the paths o' Satan,  
Whose comin' step there's ears thet won't,  
No, not life-long, leave off a waitin'."

" Why, hain't I held 'em on my knee ?  
 Didn't I love to see 'em growin',  
 Two likely lads ez wal could be,  
 Hahnsome an' brave, an' not tu knowin' ?  
 I set an' look into the blaze,  
 Whose nater, jes' like theirn, keeps climbin'  
 Ez long 'z it lives, in shinin' ways,  
 An' half despise myself for rhymin'.

" Wut's words to them whose faith and truth  
 On War's red techstone rang true metal,  
 Who ventered life an' love an' youth  
 For the gret prize o' death in battle ?  
 To him who, deadly hurt, agen  
 Flashed on afore the charge's thunder,  
 Tippin' with fire the bolt of men  
 That rived the rebel lines asunder."

This happened long after the period of which we now speak—the allusion in the last stanza is to General Charles Russell Lowell—the "young Telemachus" of his uncle's "Moosehead Journal," who died in Sheridan's famous cavalry fight at Winchester in 1864.

We find pictures and suggestions from this "Moosehead Journal," or from the wanderings in the New England forest which it describes, in many of the poems of Lowell. The verses, "To a Pine-Tree," commencing—

" Far up on Katahdin thou towerest,"

are of this period, and so, perhaps, is "The Birch-Tree," wherein occurs the fine lines portraying to the eye by words the delicate beauty of the birch as seen in the forest :

" Upon the brink of some wood-nestled lakelet,  
 Thy foliage, like the tresses of a Dryad,  
 Dripping about thy slim white stem, whose shadow  
 Slopes quivering down the water's dusky quiet,  
 Thou shrunk'st as on her bath's edge would some startled Dryad."



In "The Fountain of Youth" the poet goes back to earlier reminiscences than those of the Maine woods, of whose beauty and solemnity Emerson, Hawthorne, Longfellow, and Thoreau have preserved the impression in their pages. It is some nearer and more civilized woodland that Lowell pictures in these musical rhymes, suggestive of Poe, but with a lighter and more wholesome melody:

" 'Tis a woodland enchanted !  
 By no sadder spirit  
 Than blackbirds and thrushes  
 That whistle to cheer it ;  
 All day in the bushes  
 This woodland is haunted.  
 The little fount gushes,  
 First smoothly, then dashes  
 And gurgles and flashes,  
 To the maples and ashes  
 Confiding its joyance.

" 'Tis a woodland enchanted !  
 A vast silver willow—  
 I know not how planted—  
 (This wood is enchanted  
 And full of surprises)  
 Stands stemming a billow,  
 A motionless billow,  
 Of ankle-deep mosses."

Wherever this Watertown woodland may be, it was one of the haunts of the poet, as well as of the blackbird and the thrush, and we may surmise that it could be seen from the top of that long hill which makes a place for Lowell's "Footpath," beyond which fancy dreams of regions of ampler ether and diviner air:

" It winds athwart the windy hill,  
 Through sallow slopes of upland bare,  
 And fancy climbs, with footfall still,  
 It's narrowing curves that end in air.



*"'Tis a woodland enchanted."*

*"THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH."*

By night, far yonder, I surmise  
 An ampler world than clips my ken,  
 Where the great stars of happier skies  
 Commingle nobler fates of men."

Maria Lowell died in October, 1853, after a long illness and a still longer period of delicate health; too fragile, as she was, to endure the cares and burdens of married life, though with the tenderest affection about her. Her death and its coming shadow were the bitterest of life's sorrows to her husband, between whose earlier and later life this affliction stood as a gulf of separation. Men are never quite the same again after such experiences; there are chapters in the book of memory that can never be reopened, and fields of their former life that they will not voluntarily revisit. It was so, no doubt, with Lowell, and certain changes that have since been noticed in his habit of looking at life may rather be ascribed to the pangs of memory than to deliberate change of opinions. His poetry, seldom pathetic before, has since become so, and there is one short strain in his "Ode to Happiness" which conveys the very hopelessness of regret, in words that the rest of the poem only weaken:

"Wing-footed! thou abid'st with him  
 Who asks it not; but he who hath  
 Watched o'er the waves thy waning path,  
 Shall never more behold returning  
 Thy high-heaped canvas shoreward yearning!  
 Thou first reveal'st to us thy face  
 Turned o'er the shoulder's parting grace,  
 A moment glimpsed, then seen no more—  
*Thou whose swift footsteps we can trace  
 Away from every mortal door.*"

Yet the poet's bereavement, instead of driving him back into solitude, after a little interval opened the world's career more widely before him. He became more hospitable than ever to young men, many of whom, like the present writer, owe him a debt of personal kindness



which they would gladly repay. He turned with closer devotion to literature, and his regard for the young, together with his ripened scholarship, gave him, in 1855, the professorship in his university which Longfellow held before him. He began the duties of this position in 1856, and performed them for twenty years, until he went abroad in 1877 to take the Spanish mission. From this he was transferred in 1880 to the Court of St. James, where he more than makes good the position held there by Everett, Bancroft, and Motley, his predecessors, in former years. In 1857, in company with Emerson, Holmes, Longfellow, and many who are no longer living, he founded the "Atlantic Monthly," of which for five years he was the editor. In planning this magazine he had occasion to revisit Concord, where, in Emerson's study, the scene of so many notable



*"It winds athwart the windy hill."*

"THE FOOT-PATH."

conversations, the new venture was talked over, and its character determined.

As a college professor, Lowell had a hard task set before him from the first, or what would have been hard to a man less gifted and genial than himself. He was the successor of Mr. Longfellow, whose gentle and hospitable nature, adorned with learning in the form most attractive to young men, had made him very popular in a college where it was not the fashion then for professors to be popular. Dr. Sprague, in his sketch of President Kirkland, relates how that good man and perfect gentleman, when visiting Princeton, where young Sprague was then studying theology, waded through snow-drifts one winter morning to make a call on the youth who had been one of his own graduates at Cambridge—whereat the young theologians wondered. "That the president of Harvard College should have come a quarter of a mile in a snow-storm and then ascended three flights of stairs, for nothing more important than to express his good-will to one of their own number, seemed to them an instance of condescension, which at least distinguished him from all other presidents of colleges with whom they were acquainted." Mr. Longfellow had this same good-will toward his students; and so, as it proved, had Mr. Lowell; while in scholarship the two friends were so unlike that what Longfellow had supplied, Lowell had no occasion to furnish, and what Longfellow lacked, Lowell could well supply. With the serious students he pursued serious studies, with the less grave he could be gay, and he not only tolerated their companionship, but encouraged it, taking walks with his class sometimes as Agassiz used to, and allowing them to feel at home with him. Gradually, too, he became one of the pillars of the University in public and social matters, developing a talent for dinner-table oratory which few had suspected in his earlier days, and which is a distinct gift, as valuable in an American college as to know the French language is indispensable in European diplomacy.

Early in Lowell's professorship the anti-slavery struggle took on a new phase in the settlement and defense of Kansas, where, in 1856-'58, the battle was really fought upon picket-lines that afterward came to



a long alternation of the defeats and victories of grand armies. Lowell at that time cherished the thought of transferring his Hosea Biglow by emigration to Kansas to tell the story of what was going on there, but "the flighty purpose never was o'ertook," and so he lost his opportunity to sing the exploits of John Brown, the Kansas hero, whom he never saw. One Sunday evening in 1857 Mr. Lowell was invited to meet Brown at Theodore Parker's house, upon one of those missionary visits of the old captain to Boston which he frequently made in his later years. But some trifling circumstance prevented, just as William Hunt was prevented two years later from carrying out his purpose to paint Brown's portrait, so that the belated Puritan went to his death without his poet or his painter.

Undoubtedly Lowell's greatest fame has been won, not by his energetic poems of the youthful, world-reforming period, nor by his more thoughtful and profound verses of the later world-wise period—majestic as some of these poems are, in single passages and in general effect—but by his unique and original "Biglow Papers." This work is his contribution as a creative writer to the world's literature, and this is also the fructification of his whole life, as the "Don Quixote" was of the life of Cervantes. It is too early as yet to pronounce definitely upon such a work, but it may be compared to the masterpiece of Spanish literature in more ways than one. Like that, it has a genuine national character, and is as distinctly American as "Don Quixote" was Spanish; like that, also, it is the national experience reflected in the mind of a scholar and man of the world, and, therefore, brings with it, besides its rusticity and racy flavor, the peculiar aroma of a literature. These poems are not ballads or songs; they have a dramatic quality, and belong to comedy. Some wonder has been expressed that a scholar like Lowell, passing most of his life in towns and colleges, should have caught so well the rustic manner of viewing things. But that has been his study quite as much as books have been, and New England as it now exists, and much more as it was in Lowell's youth and early manhood, everywhere furnishes this rural and popular character in which Lowell delights. By the roadside at Elmwood, in the taverns



of the Port, along the meadows of Concord, in the woods of Maine, and even in the streets of Boston and New York, he has studied at his leisure and for all his life these Yankee traits which he depicts. Bryant, our earliest good poet, as he walked through New York, had the air of a prosperous New England carpenter; Lowell himself describes Emerson as "a Greek head on right Yankee shoulders," and compares Parker, the great preacher of Boston, to a plowman of Lexington, or "brown-fisted Hobnail hoeing a drill." In America we are strongly suffused with these Saxon peasant qualities, while there is also something ideal and universal in the mind of our countrymen. Lowell has had the gift and the good fortune to seize these traits in their immediate combination, when there are at once the strongest contrast and the closest chemical union, and thus he presents us Parson Wilbur, Farmer Biglow, and all his subordinate persons in genial comedy. He could not have done this so well had he not possessed these mixed qualities in his own genius, which, with all its English leanings and universal culture, is strictly, broadly American, and the "Biglow Papers" its highest expression thus far. What is yet before him in literary achievement can not be told, but, at the age of sixty-two, most men have done their best work, though they may not have reached their highest fame.

THE END.

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Butler









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